

**Polybius' concept of *pragmatikê historia*;**  
**Constitutional Decline and the Struggle for the Peloponnese.**

A dissertation submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

At the University of London

By Paul Christopher Hunt

Department of History

University College London



## Acknowledgements

Many theses begin with a formal debt of gratitude towards one's parents. However, words are completely and utterly insufficient to convey the debt of gratitude that I owe to my parents, my brother John and my Uncle Patrick, who throughout my time as a student have been sources of strength, support and love. I know that I am very lucky to have them as my family.

On a more academic level, John North, ~~and Michael~~  
~~Cranford~~ <sup>made</sup> <sup>the list</sup> comments on various stages of this work. Thomas Heine Nielsen of the Copenhagen Polis Centre also kindly sent me sections of his work. Andrew Erskine's advice was of immense help, and they might never be able to distil the countless bottles of Paddy I've promised to give him in return. Translations and references to Polybius' histories and Plutarch's lives are adapted from W.R. Paton's Loeb edition.

On a more personal note, some of the staff at the Western Eye Hospital made my time working there enjoyable and happy. I'd like to thank my Colleague John Kearney, Manager Parmi Walia, Patsy in Visual Fields, Sister Jo Coleman, Brigitta and Chantal in Outpatients, Sister Jackie Paterson in the Alex Cross Ward and everybody else who made me aware of the necessity of private health insurance. Nor could I ignore the contributions made by friends like Mary Ruskin, Claudia Betti and Emma Weingartner, or long-suffering flatmates like Peter Caley, Dilia Zapparova and Andrew Faith. In particular I'd like to thank Joe Clayton, whose ability to keep me amused at coffee whilst recounting his inherent ability to pick the wrong women probably also kept me sane at times. The contributions made by Maria Cannata, Naomi Holibarton, Anna Gibson and Vina Tsakali were also important.

The Patrol Officers, Constables and Field Reservists of the British South African Police's Anti-Terrorist Unit, stationed at Bitika, whom I knew as a child, also taught me one or two things that made me think about imperialism later on in life.

Finally, this section would not be complete without mention of Stefania Bernini. I know you'll never read this, but if you do, I admit it: you were right and I was wrong: but only about what we discussed while we waited for the bus to Greenwich. I do sincerely hope that Laterina is the same as when you left it. They say that as he approached death, Beethoven reflected on his life, especially his relationship with his nephew Karl. In his last string quartet, which he entitled, "*Der schwer gefasste Entschluss*", the last movement is based entirely on the two motifs which he believed summed up life, *Muss es sein? Es muss sein!* But in reality he was wrong, in life, *Es könnte auch anders sein*.



## Abstract

This thesis will contend that Polybius' stress on Achaean unity was related to his need to contrast how *tyche* and *anacyclosis*, the two vital supernatural forces that he believed influenced historical events, had influenced the Achaean system of polity detrimentally. Examining the rationale behind Aetolian intervention in the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period, it will contend that the Aetolians and their allies in Elis and Sparta were engaged in a struggle for control over the Peloponnese against the Macedonians and their Arcadian allies, a situation the Romans exploited.

During the Second Macedonian War Polybius presents the Achaean league and Rome acting as equals; this was related to his desire to show the eventual decline in Greece that allowed the Romans to gain control. In reality Flamininus exploited Megalopolitan fears over Aetolian and Spartan interests to ensure the Peloponnese remained stable during the Aetolian/Syrian War. Afterwards Polybius took the question of the Spartan exiles, a relatively unimportant question, and presented its resolution as the decisive turning point in the relationship between Rome and the Achaean league, Callicrates' speech in front of the senate marking the onset of the final stage of *anacyclosis* in Achaean democracy. This process continued in his portrayal of later events; Polybius was detained by the Romans because of his sympathy for Perseus during the Third Macedonian War; however he blamed Callicrates because at this point he wished to present the corruption and decline that was occurring in the Achaean league. This process ended with the destruction of Corinth in 146BC, where Polybius emphasises the madness and irrationality of the Achaean mob and leadership. This was to provide his readers with the consolation that their society would emerge renewed and strengthened at a time that the Roman Republic began its eventual decline through the resumption of *anacyclosis*.



## Table of Contents

Introduction. - Understanding Imperialism. pp.1-20.

Chapter One. - The purpose of *pragmatikê historia*. pp. 21- 64.

Chapter Two. - Polybius' presentation of the Peloponnese in his *pragmatikê historia*; Aetolia's kinship relationship with Elis and Cleomenes' revolution. pp. 65-114.

Chapter Three.- The evolution of Hellenistic leagues. pp. 115-140.

Chapter Four.- The Aetolian/Achaean alliance and the outbreak of the Social War. pp. 141- 172.

Chapter Five.- Polybius, the Peloponnese and the advent of Rome. pp. 173- 238.

Chapter Six.- The fruits of co-operation. pp. 239-302.

Chapter Seven.- Polybius, the Peloponnese and resistance to Rome. pp. 303-378.

Conclusion.- Polybius, posterity and the limits of literary history. pp. 379-389.

Bibliography.- pp. 390-407.

## Introduction

### Understanding Imperialism.

#### Introduction.

Polybius begins his histories by stating that he intended to write a universal history that would deal with the questions of how and under what system of polity the Romans came to control the Mediterranean world. Taking as his starting point the 140th Olympiad in 220BC, Polybius contended that before this point the history of the world had been a series of unconnected events, separate in their origins and effect. Afterwards the rise of Rome unified the histories of four regions, Africa, Asia, Greece and Italy, leading to Polybius' claim that he was writing a universal history that would explain Rome's dominance to his readers. Polybius' chief concern was with educating the active or aspiring statesman, who, he believed, would learn from his history practical lessons that they could apply to their future dealings, terming his writings, *pragmatikê historia*. Polybius' stated aim in writing history was to explain Roman rule over the Mediterranean world to his readership. His intention was to record the past so that Greek political leaders would be able to understand Rome's extraordinary success. The explanation for this success, Polybius believed, lay in the suspension of the natural deterioration of constitutions in the Roman system government, which Polybius termed *anacyclosis*.

This thesis will assess the extent to which Polybius' writings can be taken by present day historians as a framework for understanding Rome's advent into the Greek world; in particular how Polybius presented the information he collected to instruct his Greek readership. Polybius' concept of history was that it was a genre whose primary purpose was to give political instruction. As a result, he presented the Achaean league, a political organisation that dominated the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period, as a single *polis*, so that he could contrast the influence that *anacyclosis* had on its system of government with Rome. His intention in doing so was to instruct his readership about the decline that had taken place in Greece, which allowed the Romans to gain mastery over it. Present day historians attempting to understand the Hellenistic world cannot use Polybius' writings as source for reconstructing events without taking into account how Polybius' stress on the role of *tyche* and *anacyclosis* in explaining historical events distorts our understanding of the situation in the Peloponnese.

Polybius, who was born sometime around 200BC at Megalopolis in Greece, led an active political life, attaining the office of *hipparch*, the second highest position in the Achaean league, before he was detained in Italy by the Romans in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War. Whilst in detention Polybius began to write a history that he believed would provide his readers with an answer to the question he posed them in the



introduction to his work. As such, Polybius' writings are of immense interest to present day historians attempting to understand the circumstances surrounding Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world. He was a contemporary source who claimed to have taken part in many of the events that he wrote about. More importantly, although during his lifetime Greece had come under Roman domination, Polybius' histories are seen as those of a Greek who, despite his detention, came to accept Roman domination and admired Roman institutions.

However, the stress in the introduction to his work on the role that the Roman Republic's system of government played in allowing it to achieve domination over the Mediterranean world may be the key to understanding Polybius' depiction of events. Polybius believed that *tyche*; a supernatural force which had a profound influence on human affairs, rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked, played an important role in allowing Rome to achieve its conquest. As he argued, historians, especially those writing a universal history, should take into account the role that *tyche* played in influencing events, since:

*Just as tyche has steered almost all the affairs of the world in one direction and forced them to converge upon one and the same goal, so it is the task of the historian to present to his reader under one synoptical view the process by which she has accomplished this general design.*<sup>1</sup>

How should present-day historians view *pragmatikê historia*, especially since Polybius wrote his histories in the belief that that *tyche*, a capricious force, influenced the events surrounding Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world? The basic premise of historians is that they should critically examine the evidence that is available to them, in order to achieve a rational explanation of past events, taking into account their own unique vantage point. In doing so, they should take into account in their writings how others have interpreted the same evidence, accounting for circumstances that have changed since their predecessors approached the subject. Yet, despite their concern with the past, historians are placed in the unenviable position of being a prisoner of their own present. They cannot foretell how changing circumstances in the future will influence their work. Ultimately, all historians can do is present their work in the hope that it will give instruction.

Present day historians trying to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world are presented with Polybius' writings,

---

<sup>1</sup> Polyb.1.4.1-3.



essentially fragments of a much wider history written by a Greek who lived in the Second Century BC. Polybius was a historian who approached the subject of history in a similar fashion to that which is outlined above. Polybius did not intend or write his histories to serve as a source of information. Like all other historical writings, Polybius' writings were the product of one man's perspective on events, written to instruct his contemporaries as to how the Romans had conquered them. They were written at a point where Greek society had undergone an abrupt change, although the long-term consequences were unknown to Polybius. As Polybius notes at one point in his histories, in his own time, Greeks had tended to devote themselves primarily to intellectual and scholarly pursuits. They had not done so primarily from choice. It was a situation they were forced into because their traditional avenues to political and military power and responsibility had been closed to them by the advent of Rome.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances, how should present day historians view the *pragmatikê historia* written by Polybius?

The historian's basic role is to critically analyse evidence; those dealing with Polybius' writings are faced with a problem. They are dealing with the writings of a historian like themselves, writing under the same influences and with his own unique prejudices, who shaped evidence available to him to give

---

<sup>2</sup> Polyb.3.59.4.



instruction to future Greek politicians. In this case, can present day historians use the information they derive from a source like Polybius, without taking into account how his viewpoint on the past, and belief in the role that his writings would play in his own present, influenced his presentation of events?

In particular, was *pragmatikê historia* a political weapon that Polybius intended as a means for instructing his readership as to how the situation they faced had come about, and to provide them with hope as to what direction *tyche* would take in the future? Literature had become the primary outlet for the expression of a political elite who found themselves denied access to their traditional roles. Polybius' stated intention as a historian was to instruct this class. His method of instructing his contemporaries, *tyche* and *anacyclosis*, influences our understanding of his writings.

Polybius presented *tyche* in his writings as the supreme force that governed historical events. The vital element, Polybius believed, that had allowed Rome to achieve its domination over the Mediterranean world, was its system of government. In light of his opening remarks about the importance of this factor in Rome's rise to greatness, *tyche's* influence on the Roman constitution and the systems of government in the states that Rome came into contact with is fundamental in understanding Polybius' presentation of events. Polybius argued that constitutional development and change in *poleis* occurred in a

cyclical manner which he termed *anacyclosis*. During this cycle the system of government in a *polis* underwent three separate stages. Initially monarchy arose, followed by oligarchy after monarchy descended into tyranny, then finally democracy, which resulted in the state collapsing into anarchy, chaos and a single destructive event. After this the cycle re-started. Polybius contended that the Romans gained their empire because they had managed to achieve a balance between the three forms of government in the cycle of *anacyclosis* in their system of government, delaying the process of *anacyclosis* during their conquest of the Mediterranean world.<sup>3</sup> However, as Polybius makes clear at the conclusion of book six, this suspension was not permanent and eventually the cycle of *anacyclosis* would resume in the Roman system of government.<sup>4</sup>

Polybius' account of *anacyclosis* is seen as an attempt by a Greek to rationalise the Roman system of government in a manner that was familiar to his native readership.<sup>5</sup> However, Polybius' intention was not to explain the Roman constitution as such; it was to explain how Rome achieved the balance in its system of government that created the circumstances that led to its conquest of the Mediterranean world.<sup>6</sup> Polybius makes

---

<sup>3</sup> Polyb.6.3.1ff.

<sup>4</sup> Polyb.6.57.1-4.

<sup>5</sup> Cornell (2001) p.47.

<sup>6</sup> Powell (2001) p. 24 " The Platonic or Polybian theory is there only to explain how Rome reached that condition; thereafter it fades out".



mention of a number of other states, both Greek and barbarian, such as Carthage and Sparta, which had previously managed to achieve the same balance as Rome had in their systems of government.<sup>7</sup> By implication, the systems of government in all *poleis* were subject to *anacyclosis* including democracies like the Achaean league, which, Polybius claimed, resembled a *polis*. *Tyche*, or fortune, had favoured the Romans. They had achieved balance in their system of government, they had access to natural resources, political acumen and an unrivalled military system: they were even barbarians who ruled Greeks. However, Rome had achieved all this at a time when *tyche* had been unfavourable to Greek states in whose system of government the process of *anacyclosis* had not been delayed.

Polybius did record the events surrounding Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world, collating the available evidence to the best of his ability. What should be questioned is whether or not his presentation of this evidence, as an author of *pragmatikê historia*, is distorted by two interrelated factors.

The first is Polybius' need to explain to his readers how the Romans had, through the workings of *tyche* and *anacyclosis*, managed to conquer the Greeks- a topic that has never been adequately assessed. I shall contend that Polybius' emphasis on the early unity of and the subsequent decline of the Achaean league, was designed to show the workings of *anacyclosis* at

---

<sup>7</sup> For Sparta see Polyb. 6.10.1-11; Carthage Polyb.6.51.1-8.



work in both their systems of government; Polybius deliberately presenting a picture of decline in Greece to account for Rome's success. This thesis will contend that Polybius' stress on the Achaean league's almost utopian unity was to show how *tyche* had been favourable to the people and city of Rome at a time when it had been unfavourable to the Achaean *ethnos*. Polybius presents the Achaean league in his *Res Graecae* as the entire Peloponnese resembling a single *polis*. His intention was to show how, through the capricious force that was *tyche*, the Achaean league had degenerated, through the workings of *anacyclosis*, from initially dealing with Rome on an equal basis under Philopoemen and Aristaenus' leadership, into mob-rule and anarchy by the time of Corinth's destruction in 146BC.

The second factor is how Polybius' stress on the unity of the Achaean league in his histories distorts our understanding of the actions undertaken by Greek states in the Peloponnese before, and during, the Roman conquest. Throughout his work, Polybius, though he was a native of Megalopolis in Arcadia, calls himself an Achaean. At the same time, it is evident from Polybius' narrative that Megalopolitans like Philopoemen, Lycortas, Aristaenus, Diophanes, Critolaus and Diaeus played a dominant role in Achaean politics. Although Polybius describes the Achaean league as a democracy, it was in reality an oligarchy in which Megalopolis had an extremely powerful position. Given that *pragmatikê historia* was intended to instruct, is

Polybius' presentation of events in the Peloponnese related to his wider objective to explain *anacyclosis* ' influence on the Achaean and Roman systems of government when they began to interact with each other?

Roman intervention in Greece had taken place in the aftermath of the Social War between the Achaean and Aetolian leagues, which was itself caused by the alliance concluded between the Achaean league and Macedonia during the Cleomenic War. Polybius portrays Aetolian actions during this period as those of irrational pirates bent on wreaking havoc on the Peloponnese, especially during their raids on Messene and Cynaetha prior to the outbreak of the Social War. Although Polybius may have believed that what he wrote about Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese was an accurate account of events I shall suggest that they only give us his own, Arcadian, perspective. It would appear that the Aetolian league claimed a mythical kinship relationship with the Eleans and that the Achaean league's alliance with Macedonia had placed the Aetolian league in an extremely dangerous position. Though the threat from Sparta to the Achaean league explains the decision to call on Macedonia, Polybius does not mention the fear that Cleomenes would export social reforms throughout the Peloponnese as a factor in the decision. From the resistance in Corinth and Sicyon after the entry of Macedonian troops into the Peloponnese, it would appear that there was widespread

opposition to this move, which was not solely based on socio-economic factors. The earlier expansion of the Achaean league into the Peloponnese, especially into Arcadia, was carried out in conjunction with the Aetolian league, with the intention of removing the pro-Macedonian tyrants in this region.

However, once Arcadian *poleis* like Megalopolis had been absorbed into the Achaean league, there was an alteration in the orientation of its policy towards these communities' interests that provoked conflict with Cleomenes' Sparta and damaged Elean interests. Polybius was a Megalopolitan; his presentation of events in the Peloponnese prior to Rome's involvement in Greek affairs was bound to be favourable to the interests of his native *polis*. No matter how justified Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese may have been, to Polybius they were aggressive acts.

Yet in some respects this is the crux of the matter. Polybius wrote to explain to his readers how the Romans came to control the Greek world. He did so in terms of the cyclical nature of history, stressing how *tyche* benefits certain states at a time when it is unfavourable to others. By stressing these factors, and emphasising the unity of the Achaean league so that he could explain its eventual decline, Polybius, whose intention was to give his contemporary readership political instruction, could not have imagined that readers who came from a completely different society would read his histories. As such, elements of



*pragmatikê historia*, which may have appeared straightforward to the readership Polybius' writings were aimed at, are alien to us. I shall suggest that Polybius' stress on Achaean unity, and his presentation of it as a single *polis*, unwittingly masks the true situation in the Peloponnese. The Achaean identity that Polybius stresses throughout his work was in reality that of an Arcadian who was a member of a political federation called the Achaean league, resulting in a partisan depiction of the actions of states like Aetolia and Sparta. Furthermore that the competing interests of the various powers and regional differences in the Peloponnese brought about Rome's initial involvement in Greek affairs, and were later exploited by Romans like Flamininus to further Rome's imperial control.

So if *tyche*'s affect on the process of *anacyclosis* in Rome and Greece is the key to understanding Polybius' portrayal of events, does this have any implications for our understanding of Roman imperialism and Polybius' portrayal of it? Polybius has in the past been seen as a man who adopted a positive view of Rome's presence in the Greek world after the destruction of Corinth in 146BC.<sup>8</sup> The view that the Hellenistic period was a time of immense social upheaval in Greece is based largely on Plutarch's account of the lives of Agis and Cleomenes which laid emphasis on the influence that Stoic philosophy played in their reforms. This view leads to a belief that the Hellenistic period was a time

---

<sup>8</sup> Walbank (1972) pp. 166-83.

of social upheaval in Greece, culminating in Corinth's destruction in 146BC.<sup>9</sup> Should this be accepted? In Polybius' account of Cleomenes' reign, which survives intact, Polybius makes no mention of either Agis or Cleomenes being influenced by Stoic philosophy. Although Cleomenes undoubtedly carried out some reforms at Sparta during some part of his reign, Polybius does not mention them directly.

Does this have any implications for our understanding of Polybius' depiction of later events? There is an assumption that the events of 146BC and Corinth's destruction by the Romans were to some extent motivated by socio-economic problems that existed in the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period. The role of the mob, its irrationality and madness is evident in Polybius' account of events leading up to Corinth's destruction in 146BC. Pausanias, drawing on Polybius, draws attention to the sordid corruption of the Achaean leadership that caused the dispute that ignited this conflict.<sup>10</sup>

However, Corinth's destruction was, as Polybius emphasised, the single greatest misfortune to have occurred in

---

<sup>9</sup> For the most recent discussion of the role of the masses in Corinth's destruction, see Eckstein (1995) pp. 135-6, who suggests that an aristocrat like Polybius feared and detested the role that the common people played in this affair.

<sup>10</sup> Paus.7.12.1-4.

Greece.<sup>11</sup> It was exactly the sort of event that occurred at the end of the cycle of *anacyclosis*, democracy degenerating into mob rule, anarchy and a single destructive event, before a strong leader emerged to save men from their weakened state.<sup>12</sup> Polybius portrayed in his histories how Rome expanded its control over Asia, Africa, Greece and Italy from 220BC onwards, the point where Polybius began his histories, claiming that the rise of Rome had unified the affairs of these four regions.<sup>13</sup> The fortunes of the Achaean league had become entwined with those of Rome from that point onwards; a period when *tyche* benefited the Romans while the cycle of *anacyclosis* was corrupting the Achaean league's democracy. Corinth's destruction ended this and as the process of *anacyclosis* resumed in Rome, Greek society would renew itself, its political classes drawing inspiration from Polybius' histories, learning how *tyche* had allowed the barbarian Romans to gain mastery over Greece, so that this situation would not re-occur.

The first four chapters will deal with the events in the Peloponnese prior to Rome's advent into the Greek world, and will examine whether the account given in Polybius' *pragmatikê historia* is a neutral one or related to his wider theme of

---

<sup>11</sup> Polyb.38.1.2. "For though both Greece and her several parts had often met with mischance, yet to none of her former defeats can we more fittingly apply the name of misfortune with all it signifies than to the events of my own time."

<sup>12</sup> Polyb. 6.9.9.

<sup>13</sup> Polyb.5.33.1-5.



explaining Roman imperialism. The first chapter will be a very brief examination of Polybius' attitude towards the writing of what he terms as *pragmatikê historia*, which is contemporary political history. The second chapter will examine the links, through *proxenia* and mythical kinship, that the Aetolian league had in the Peloponnese, to see if they might provide a different viewpoint on the Aetolian league's interests in the Peloponnese from that presented by Polybius. From there the expansion of the Achaean league under Aratus and the influence that it had in bringing the Achaean league into conflict with Sparta will be examined. I shall argue that once Cleomenes had effectively gained control over the Peloponnese, Arcadian *poleis* in the Achaean league, such as Megalopolis, appealed to their traditional ally Macedonia for assistance, even though this was at variance with the wishes of the inhabitants of *poleis* such as Corinth and Sicyon.

The third chapter will look at how accurate Polybius' depiction of the development of the Achaean league during the Hellenistic period actually is and how it compared with the evolution of the Aetolian league. Unlike the Achaean league, which appears from its inception to have been a political organisation, the Aetolians from the archaic period onwards formed an *ethnos* and were a distinct people in the same manner that the Arcadians were. Thus, although the Aetolian league expanded during the Hellenistic period, Aetolians from the

*ethnos* retained control over the office of *strategos*. However, in the Achaean league the office of Achaean *strategos* was dominated firstly by Aratus of Sicyon and later by Megalopolitans. While there was traditionally an assumption that both leagues evolved in a similar fashion, the archaeological evidence would seem to suggest otherwise, the Achaean identity espoused by Polybius being essentially artificial.

This has ramifications for our understanding of Aetolian actions during the Social War, which will be the topic of the fourth chapter. Aratus' expansion into Arcadia had been carried out in conjunction with the Aetolian league, with the stated aim of ridding the Peloponnese of pro-Macedonian tyrants. Once the Macedonians had re-entered the Peloponnese, the Aetolian league was placed in a dangerous strategic position. Instead of viewing Aetolian actions prior to the Social War as irrational acts of piracy, as Polybius presents them, the raids launched on Messene and Cynaetha were actually part of a military strategy conceived by the Aetolian league's leadership to defend their mythical kinsmen in Elis. The intention is to find out whether Polybius' contention that the cause of these two wars was merely avaricious behaviour by the Aetolian league is defensible.

The fifth chapter will focus on how Rome exploited the situation in the Peloponnese to further its imperial ambitions. Instead of viewing the treaty between the Aetolian league and Rome in 212/211BC as a joint looting expedition, I shall suggest

that the Romans approached the Aetolian league because they knew of the difficult situation it faced after the Macedonian entry into the Peloponnese and sought to exploit it. The reference in Livy to the Romans promising to restore parts of Acarnania to Aetolian control suggests that the treaty was concluded to assist the Aetolians in their effort to regain some of the ground that they had lost to the Macedonians. Furthermore, the mention of so many allies of the Aetolian league as Roman *adscripti* in the Peace of Phoenice indicates that the Romans were successful in finding a pretext for a further intervention in the Greek world when the Second Punic War was over.

From there the chapter will turn towards the Second Macedonian War, in particular the alliance between the Achaean league and Flamininus in 198BC. Once the alliance with the Aetolian league had served its purpose Flamininus allied with the Achaean league, taking advantage of Megalopolitan fears that they would find themselves isolated when they faced a renewed threat from Sparta under Nabis. I will suggest that the treaty of alliance between Rome and the Achaean league was concluded much earlier than previously thought.

The sixth chapter will examine the fruits of co-operation between the Achaean league and Rome. Polybius presents the initial phase of the relationship between Rome and Achaea as one between equals. In reality, Megalopolitans within the Achaean league appear to have co-operated with the Romans,



foiling the plot to bring Antiochus to Greece swiftly, because they sought to profit from the defeat of the Aetolian league. I shall argue that Flamininus rewarded the Megalopolitan leadership of the Achaean league by granting them control over Sparta, Elis and Messene in return for their support during the Aetolian/Syrian War.

When this war was over Philopoemen began to direct the Achaean league towards renewing its alliances with a number of Hellenistic monarchs. The Romans, who expected their subjects to behave in a different manner, exploited grievances at Sparta, and later Messene, to undermine the Megalopolitan position in the Achaean league. I shall suggest firstly that Callicrates' actions in 180BC, in particular his settlement of Spartan affairs, drew Polybius' ire because he broke the dominance that Megalopolitans had held over the Achaean league for at least twenty-five years beforehand. Secondly, that Polybius depicted Callicrates' mission as marking the onset of the final stage of *anacyclosis* in the Achaean system of government, and that from this point onwards Achaean democracy began its degeneration into mob-rule, anarchy and a final destructive event.

The final chapter will look at resistance in the Achaean league towards Rome, in particular Polybius' attitude towards it. Before the outbreak of the Third Macedonian War, Megalopolitans, who felt that their interests had been betrayed by Callicrates' settlement in Sparta, tried to push the Achaean

league towards supporting Perseus and that Polybius' subsequent behaviour during the Roman invasion of Macedonia resulted in his detention. Although Polybius holds Callicrates personally responsible for his detention, I shall suggest that Callicrates merely used Roman suspicion at Polybius' actions to remove one of his rivals and advance the interests of his own region at the expense of the Arcadian communities within the Achaean league. Furthermore, that by placing the blame solely on Callicrates, Polybius was attempting to show how *anacyclosis* had resulted in corrupt politicians gaining control of the Achaean league

From there the chapter will look at the events surrounding the Achaean War of 146BC, a problematic question since Polybius' account of it is extremely fragmentary. I shall suggest that the causes of the war itself were not socio-economic tensions. Rather, that when, after the death of Callicrates, a new generation of politicians from Megalopolis began to re-assert their position, regional tension within the Peloponnese resulted in Sparta attempting to secede from the Achaean league. Furthermore, that Polybius' depiction of these events shows not that he considered the leaders of the revolt to have been demagogues who threatened to bring socio-economic upheaval to the Peloponnese. Rather that his emphasis on the mob and anarchy was an attempt to show his readers that the cycle of *anacyclosis* in the Achaean system of government was over. His



intention in doing so was to point out to his readers that the Achaean league would renew itself at the same time as the Roman Republic began to decline from within.

Traditionally, Polybius has been seen as a descendent of Thucydides, writing contemporary political history with the intention of instructing his readership. Even in antiquity the link between historians and exile or separation from their homeland was noticed.<sup>14</sup> Thucydides was exiled from Athens for his failure at Amphipolis and both Herodotus and Xenophon spent long periods away from their homelands.

Unlike these earlier historians, Polybius was not exiled; he was detained at the hands of an alien power that had destroyed his society, ended its independence, and imposed its own authority and rule. The question arises whether Polybius came to accept Roman domination and wrote so that both the Greeks and Romans would come to understand each other? Or whether the intention of *pragmatikê historia* was to explain to his Greek readers how the barbarian Romans had managed to achieve the unthinkable, thus providing them with the consolation that, although it had happened, the cyclical nature of history was such that eventually they would regain what they had lost.

---

<sup>14</sup> Plut.*Moralia* 605C.



## Chapter One

### The purpose of *pragmatikê historia*

#### Introduction

At the introduction to his histories Polybius explains his decision to write them in the form of a question, aimed at his contemporary readership, pointing out that:

*Who is so lacking in curiosity and so worthless as not to wish to know by what means and under what system of polity the Romans have succeeded in under fifty three years in bringing almost the entire inhabited world under their control, an event unique in history.*<sup>1</sup>

Taking as his starting point the 140th Olympiad in 220BC, Polybius contended that before this point the history of the world had been a series of unconnected events, separate in their origins and effect. Later the rise of Rome unified the histories of four regions, Africa, Asia, Greece and Italy, leading to Polybius' claim that he was writing a universal history that would explain the rise of Rome to his readers.<sup>2</sup> Polybius' chief concern was with

---

<sup>1</sup> Polyb.1.2.5. At the conclusion to his histories, (Polyb.39.8. 7.) "As I said, students by this treatment will attain the best and most salutary result, which is to know how and by what system of polity the whole world was subjected to the single rule of Rome, an event without any parallel in the past".

<sup>2</sup>Polyb.5.33.1-5. Walbank (1972) pp.1-18 addresses the question of Polybius' readership and intentions, arguing that Polybius intended his histories to be used as a guidebook for Greek politicians in their dealings with Rome.

educating the active or aspiring statesman, who, he believed, would learn from his history both practical lessons and general wisdom- as he termed it, *pragmatikê historia*.

Polybius' stated aim in writing history was to explain Roman rule over the Mediterranean world to his readership. His intention was to reconstruct past events in a fashion that would provide Greek political leaders with an explanation for Roman rule over the Mediterranean world. The model he chose to explain this conquest was Rome's system of government and the influence of *anacyclosis*' suspension on it. This chapter will assess Polybius' attitude towards the writing of history; in particular how he presented the information he collected to instruct his readership. Polybius' concept of history was that it was a medium whose primary purpose was to give political instruction. As a result he presented the Achaean league, a political organisation that dominated the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period, as a single *polis* so that he could contrast the influence that *anacyclosis* had on its system of government with that of Rome. His intention in doing so was to instruct his readership about the decline that had taken place in Greece, which had allowed the Romans to gain mastery over it. It will question the extent to which present day historians can use Polybius' writings as a source for reconstructing events during the Hellenistic period without taking into account how his stress on the role of *tyche* and



*anacyclosis* in historical events distorts our understanding of the situation in the Peloponnese.

### Polybius on the writing of history

In book twelve of his histories Polybius examines the approach of other Hellenistic historians, finding fault with his contemporaries' methodology, and then proceeds to expound his own approach to *historia* at great length. For Polybius, history's sole purpose was to give instruction to future politicians.<sup>3</sup> Polybius believed that those who had practical experience in politics were best qualified to perform this task and he extensively criticised historians whose knowledge of past events did not come from personal experience, which he believed was vital. Polybius had been *hipparch* of the Achaean league before his detention in Italy: his father Lycortas and his family's close ally Philopoemen had dominated the office of

---

<sup>3</sup> See Sacks (1981) pp. 21-96 for the best discussion of Polybius' narrative method, which focuses on book six. Sacks identified three important terms that Polybius used to define his intention in writing history. *Autopatheia*, or personal experience, (p. 32) and *empeiria*, or actual experience (p.35) were for Polybius the key factors necessary for those writing *pragmatikê historia*. More problematic in any discussion of Polybius' attitude towards *historia* is his use of *emphasis*, both in book six and elsewhere. Sacks discusses Polybius' use of *emphasis* in detail, (pp.36-56) contending that despite Polybius' varied use of this word in different contexts, *emphasis* has one basic meaning, "they (all) describe a transference of knowledge from the person creating the *emphasis* to the intended recipient"(p. 36).



Achaean *strategos* for long periods.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Polybius claimed to have travelled extensively throughout the Mediterranean world because of his detention in Rome and friendship with Scipio Aemilianus, as reflected in book thirty-four where he writes on the geography of Europe and Africa.<sup>5</sup>

Book twelve is, in reality, largely devoted to a polemic against other historians' methods. Timaeus, who wrote a history of Sicily, though his work has survived only in fragments, has his writings singled out for particular reproach by Polybius. According to Polybius, a historian of political affairs should have proficiency in three areas: the study of written sources, a detailed knowledge of the places that he is writing about and personal experience in political affairs.<sup>6</sup> Historians such as Timaeus were, Polybius believed, unable to write history properly, since they were neither proficient in political affairs nor widely travelled. As Polybius states about Timaeus' methodology:

*He believed that by settling in Athens for nearly fifty years and acquainting himself with what his predecessors had written, he had thoroughly prepared himself to write history, a very deluded supposition in my view.*<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See Eckstein (1995) p.3 for Polybius' background and political connections.

<sup>5</sup> Walbank (1979) pp. 563-4.

<sup>6</sup> Polyb.12.25E.1. Also at 12.25G.1.

<sup>7</sup> Polyb.12.25.D.1.

In criticising Timaeus' approach to history, Polybius argued that historians should not deal with events that took place in the distant past. Polybius contended that history should instead deal with contemporary events. Regarding his own work and the period that he wrote about, Polybius states that it coincided with his own generation and that of his father thereby allowing him to draw on his own political experiences and those of his contemporaries. Polybius' detention in Italy and later his travels, allowed him a unique view of the world he wrote about, such as his description of the destruction of Carthage- an event Polybius claims to have witnessed at Scipio's invitation and by his side.

As for other historical approaches, Polybius forcefully states that historians like Timaeus, writing about genealogies, the foundation myths of *poleis* and such matters, were unable to comprehend history properly. As he argued, such a historian:

*Either must repeat what others have said, while passing it off as his own, which is very wrong, or, if he refuses to do this, his work will prove quite useless, since he will as a result concede that what he writes and thinks about is what his predecessors have adequately dealt with before.... accordingly it was my decision to write contemporary history, first because new events are constantly taking place and require treatment for the first time.... secondly, because this is the most instructive type of history.*<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Polyb.9.2.2-6.



Polybius' approach to history was in the tradition set by Thucydides, rejecting an exploration of events in the distant past, along with mythological factors, in favour of contemporary political and military history.<sup>9</sup> Through his extensive knowledge of internal Greek politics, from his own experiences as Achaean *hipparch*, or through those of his father Lycortas- the Achaean league's *strategos* on a number of occasions, it appears that Polybius' histories were based on first hand experience. His detention in Rome may have allowed Polybius the opportunity to question both the actions of his fellow detainees and more importantly, the actions of influential Romans, giving him the ability to understand the reasoning and motives of those who took differing positions to his own.<sup>10</sup> Finally, Polybius appears to have been familiar with some archive material; his account of the alliance between Philip V and Hannibal appears to have been based on the Punic original.<sup>11</sup>

Despite this, problems with Polybius' writings have been identified. Scholars see Polybius' application of causation at best as a mechanical copy of Thucydides; Polybius never gives us any

---

<sup>9</sup> Hornblower (1994) p. 60 draws attention to a number of passages that indicate Polybius' knowledge of Thucydides. He suggests that Polybius had a clear view of Greek history from 480BC onwards.

<sup>10</sup> Walbank (1972) p. 75 draws attention to Polybius' detailed knowledge of events in Philip V's court during the last years of his reign, information that Polybius could only have obtained from somebody who was there, presumably one of his fellow detainees.



indication of the motivation and reasoning behind many of the actions that he describes in his work, notably Antiochus' motives at the outbreak of the Aetolian/Syrian War, despite expounding his theory of causation at length.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, as Walbank pointed out, although Polybius claimed to be writing a universal history, the history of the Achaean league was an important secondary theme in his writings. Walbank suggests this was due to Polybius basing his history on earlier works. According to Walbank's hypothesis, before his detention in Rome, Polybius had already composed a life of Philopoemen, which he expanded into a history of the Achaean league from where Aratus' Memoirs left off in 220BC. Eventually, Walbank suggests that Polybius used these two earlier works as the basis for his universal history.<sup>13</sup> Walbank argues that a close examination of what remains of the histories shows us that:

*The parts of the histories that deal with Achaea and the unification of the Peloponnese seem to fit naturally enough into the greater work, where they constitute a*

---

<sup>11</sup> Gruen (1984) p.60. Walbank (1972) pp.82-83 suggests that Polybius' access to archival material was probably limited, though he did make use of this source when possible.

<sup>12</sup> For an exploration of Polybius' theory of causation, see Derow (1994) pp. 73-90. Though Derow acknowledges that Polybius widened the notion of causation from "how" to "why", he nevertheless insists that one of the fundamental problems of Polybius' histories fail to explain the causes with all their intricacies and full complexity.

<sup>13</sup> See Walbank (1972) p. 14. Since neither of these two works survives, it should be noted that there is actually no evidence for this view. Walbank describes this possibility as not impossible, but dependent on speculation.

*minor variation on the major theme of oecumenical unity under the guidance of Rome.*<sup>14</sup>

However, events in the Peloponnese take up a significant portion of Polybius' surviving text. Polybius' concern with this region's affairs, especially those of the Achaean league, heavily influences his presentation of Rome's advent in the Greek world. Polybius admitted that it was impossible for a historian not to write about his homeland with favouritism and held that this was acceptable as long as it did not contradict the facts.<sup>15</sup> It has been acknowledged that opponents of the Achaean league such as Aetolia and Sparta receive negative treatment at Polybius' hands.<sup>16</sup>

As for Polybius' attitude in his histories towards the actions of states and individuals, Walbank argues that Polybius was almost Machiavellian, in that he exercised a utilitarian and ruthless standard of judgement in assessing others. Success, according to Walbank, was important to Polybius at all costs; being the ultimate criterion that governed human behaviour, no heed was to be paid to ethics.<sup>17</sup> More recently Eckstein has suggested that Polybius' work was part of the moralistic genre of literature that was widespread in the Hellenistic period and that

---

<sup>14</sup> Walbank (1972) p. 15-16.

<sup>15</sup> Polyb.16.14.6.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Luce (1997) p. 132 who describes Polybius' criticism of the Aetolian league as a minor lapse from his standards of veracity.

<sup>17</sup> Walbank (1972) p.164.



many of Polybius' judgements on states and individuals derive from his aristocratic background.<sup>18</sup>

An interesting example of the differences between Walbank and Eckstein comes in book four, in two passages where Polybius suggests that Messene and Arcadia should ally, a comment which he follows up with the suggestion that war is not the greatest of all evils.<sup>19</sup> Eckstein suggests that Polybius was actually expressing his own carefully thought-out opinions about the ethics of peace and war and that the examples that he gives are not actually relevant, simply ones that his readers would find familiar.<sup>20</sup> Walbank earlier contended that these two passages represented clever strokes of policy, all aimed at strengthening the Achaean league against Sparta- the Arcadian/Messenian co-operation suggested by Polybius has the explicit goal of balancing Spartan power.<sup>21</sup> As Walbank points out, Polybius' advice to Elis to become permanently neutral subtly achieves the same result since its neutrality would deprive Sparta of an ally.<sup>22</sup> Given that Megalopolis and Sparta

---

<sup>18</sup> See Eckstein (1995) especially pp. 1-25, which examines Walbank's "Polybius", and draws attention to earlier writers, such as Dryden and John Adams, who both regarded Polybius as a moralist.

<sup>19</sup> Polyb.4.30.5. and Polyb. 3.33.12.

<sup>20</sup> Eckstein (1995) pp. 60-61.

<sup>21</sup> Polyb.4.33.11.

<sup>22</sup> Walbank (1957) p. 478 and (1972) p. 20. He suggests that these passages are later insertions just before publication of the first fifteen books, and was probably written



were long-standing rivals, Polybius' concern, according to Walbank, appears to be to secure the Achaean league's position in the Peloponnese.

Was Polybius' account of events in the Peloponnese a dispassionate one, especially given his intention to instruct? Or was it related to his intention to explain Rome's conquest through *tyche's* influence on the process of *anacyclosis* in systems of government? Polybius stated that he was writing a certain type of history that would appeal to those interested in public life, and that as a result, his writings were not aimed at the general reader. Polybius clearly differentiates *pragmatikê historia* from other histories that featured myths, legends, genealogies and stories surrounding the foundation of *poleis* and colonies.<sup>23</sup>

Despite Polybius' contention that those writing *pragmatikê historia* should ignore mythological factors, focusing instead on military and political affairs, recent epigraphic evidence suggests that claims of pan-Dorian brotherhood between states was an important factor in determining the foreign policy of the Aetolian league in the late Hellenistic period. Polybius was aware of the role that claims of mythical kinship played in the conduct of relations between states, mentioning kinship relationships between Sparta and Selge, and Rome and Ilium.<sup>24</sup>

---

around 150/149BC, when relations between the Achaean league and Sparta were deteriorating.

<sup>23</sup> Polyb.9.1.2.

<sup>24</sup> For Polybius' awareness of kinship relations, see Polyb.5.76.11.

In the past scholars have discounted the importance of kinship links, but they appear, on the basis of epigraphic evidence, to have been an important factor in governing the relations between Greek states. Evidently there were two schools of history in the late Hellenistic period, one represented by Polybius writing *pragmatikê historia*, and the other represented by Timaeus, whose writings presumably placed more emphasis to the mythological aspects of the relations between states.<sup>25</sup>

### Polybius and Achaean Unity; Federalism and the socio-economic question in the Peloponnese

Not only is Polybius the only surviving contemporary source for Rome's advent in the Greek world but his histories are also the only contemporary literary source that deals with the situation in the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period. Polybius paid particular attention to the unity of this region under the Achaean league, but was Polybius' depiction of the situation in the Peloponnese related to his primary concern in writing *pragmatikê historia*; providing his readers with an explanation for Roman control over the Greek world? Although the Greek world contained a large number of federal states, it is astonishing that there is a complete and utter lack of any

---

<sup>25</sup> Writing in the First Century BC, the noted critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus identified three major types of historical writing: local chronicles, larger scale histories as written by Herodotus, and the intermediate type, best exemplified by Thucydides. See Sacks (1981) p. 98.



explanation from the ancient sources about how these states actually functioned. In Polybius this omission is even more startling. Polybius had been *hipparch* of the Achaean league before his detention in Rome and was extremely interested in constitutional matters. Polybius should have been the right person to tell us in detail about the organisation and workings of the Achaean league, yet he is remarkably silent on this topic.<sup>26</sup>

This omission is even more surprising since in his histories Polybius depicts a situation far removed from the one that pertained in the classical period. Throughout his work Polybius refers to himself as an Achaean, though he was a native of Megalopolis in Arcadia, since in 235BC Megalopolis had become a member of the Achaean league. According to Polybius, the Achaean league had developed to a point where all the *poleis* that became members of it shared the same law courts and *boule*.<sup>27</sup>

This situation came about, he argued, because of the freedom the Achaean league's system of government gave its members, since:

---

<sup>26</sup> Lehmann (2001) pp.49-53 suggests that Polybius may have had a detailed description of how the Achaean constitution functioned in one of his later books.

<sup>27</sup> Polyb.2.37.10.



*One could not find a political system and principle so favourable to equality and freedom of speech, in a word, so sincerely democratic.*<sup>28</sup>

Despite these claims, scholars have long accepted that Polybius exaggerated the unity of the Achaean league.<sup>29</sup> The area around Dyme, Patrae, Pharea and Tritaea, the *poleis* that originally formed the Achaean league, appears to have had a form of local government distinct from the rest of the Achaean league during the Hellenistic period.<sup>30</sup> *Poleis* that were members of the Achaean league regularly sent embassies to each other as if they were independent states.<sup>31</sup>

Polybius stresses the freedom and equality within the democratic Achaean league in his histories; he also makes it apparent that many of its members during the Hellenistic period joined unwillingly. As he admitted:

---

<sup>28</sup> Polyb.2.38.6. Despite Polybius' claim that the Achaean league was a democratic organisation, modern scholars have tended to doubt this. Aymard (1938) p. 17 n. 10 and Walbank (1957) p. 222, both argue that it was an oligarchy. Lehmann (2001) pp.58-61 argues that Polybius is making reference in this passage to Aristotle's claim that the tribal states of Greece had the structure of mere *symmachies*, and that this reference is a response to Aristotle's claim that that it would be impossible to build a wall around the Peloponnese.

<sup>29</sup> Larsen (1968) pp.215-240, though accepting Polybius' account of the development of the Achaean league, exercises some caution, accepting that (p.219) "this unity may seem artificial and unnatural".

<sup>30</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 339.

<sup>31</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 238.

*Some of the Peloponnesians chose to join it of their own free will, it won many others by persuasion and argument, and those whom it forced to adhere to it when the occasion presented itself, suddenly underwent a change and became quite reconciled to their position.*<sup>32</sup>

As Walbank pointed out, states that became members of the Achaean league can be divided into two categories; those who joined voluntarily and those who were forced into it against their will.<sup>33</sup> Catherine Morgan has recently disputed Polybius' account of the development of the Achaean league from the archaic period onwards; pointing out that the archaeological evidence contradicts much of what he writes. She argues that the Achaeans did not form a distinct nation, or *ethnos*, during the archaic period. She suggests it is probable that the Achaean league was an artificially based political organisation whose members came together due to their need for mutual protection, contending that Polybius' account of early Achaean history was an attempt to create a historical past for the Achaean league of his own day.<sup>34</sup> In light of this, should Polybius' assertion that the development of the Achaean league resulted in the various *ethne* of the Peloponnese uniting to form one *ethnos* be accepted? In particular should we accept that Polybius, an Arcadian from

---

<sup>32</sup> Polyb.2.38.7.

<sup>33</sup> Walbank (1957) p. 222.

<sup>34</sup> Morgan (1996) p.195.



Megalopolis, adopted an Achaean identity? Scholars in the past, looking towards the United States of America as a model, suggested that the Achaean league during the Hellenistic period came to form a strong centralised government which united the disparate peoples of the Peloponnese into a single state.

However, the United States of America is merely one example of a modern political federation. Polybius' presentation of the destruction of Corinth in 146BC; anarchy, an irrational leadership, and its constituent members attempting to secede, echoes the demise of one of the most important political federations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which collapsed in similar chaotic circumstances. The whole concept of modern federalism has also evolved; like the Achaean league, the European Union has common law courts, standardised weights and measurements, and with a few exceptions, a common currency. Despite this unity regarding certain matters, countries within the European Union retain their own national governments. Though elements of a centralised administration such as a parliament do exist, its powers are limited, the constituent members of the European Union remaining sovereign states. The states of the Peloponnese did belong to some form of a political union during the Hellenistic period. This does not necessarily mean that they considered themselves to be a single *ethnos*, or people. As Polybius' histories relate, many of the states that were members of the Achaean



league during the Hellenistic period were forced into it, notably Corinth, Argos, Sparta, Elis and Messene. At various stages both Sparta and Messene tried to leave the Achaean league, Messene attempting to secede from the league in 183BC, while a similar attempt by the Spartans to leave provoked the crisis that led to the Roman sack of Corinth in 146BC.

The leadership of the Achaean league was not representative of its members; the dominance of Megalopolitans over the office of Achaean *strategos* has been noted.<sup>35</sup> Despite this, the influence that Megalopolitan dominance over this office may have had on the events leading up to Rome's involvement in Hellenic affairs has not been assessed. Of particular interest are the decision by the Achaean league to invite Antigonus Doson into the Peloponnese in 220BC to seek his assistance against Cleomenes of Sparta, and later the decision, under Aristaenus' influence, to ally the Achaean league with Rome in 198BC. Polybius presents these actions as decisions that were forced on the Achaean league by circumstances beyond its control. In reality, the first changed the balance of power in Greece in favour of the Macedonians, the traditional rivals of the Aetolian league; the second appears to have affected the interests that the Aetolian league had in the Peloponnese and endangered the position of its kinsmen in Elis. The influence that Megalopolitan membership of the Achaean league had in

---

<sup>35</sup> O' Neil (1984-86) pp. 34-36.

provoking conflict between the Achaean league and Sparta from 235BC onwards, with Megalopolitans playing an important role in opening the negotiations leading to the alliance with Macedonia, has been noted.<sup>36</sup>

According to Plutarch, Aratus' first instinct was to appeal to the Aetolian league for assistance against Cleomenes and it was only when they refused that he reluctantly agreed to call on the Macedonians.<sup>37</sup> The earlier alliance between the Aetolian league and Aratus during the Achaean league's expansion into the Peloponnese has been frequently overlooked.<sup>38</sup> The decision by the Achaean league to invite Antigonus Doson to re-enter the Peloponnese placed the Aetolian league in a dangerous strategic situation, leading to the outbreak of the Social War and subsequently the Aetolian alliance with Rome during the First Macedonian War.<sup>39</sup>

Were the crimes that Polybius depicts Aetolians committing in the Peloponnese prior to the outbreak of the Social War in reality an attempt to gain a strategic foothold in this region? For example, Polybius portrays the Aetolian league's raid on Cynaetha before the outbreak of the Social War as a betrayal by malcontent exiles, who had been restored to this *polis* shortly

---

<sup>36</sup> See Scholten (2000) p.188 for the pressure exerted on Aratus by former Antigonid clients in the Achaean league.

<sup>37</sup> Plut. *Arat.*41.2. Scholten (2000) pp.187-88.

<sup>38</sup> It has not been entirely ignored, see Larsen (1975) pp.159-79.

<sup>39</sup> Scholten (2000) p.230.



beforehand.<sup>40</sup> Cynaetha was situated at the centre of an important communication route in the Peloponnese and had been earlier forced into the Achaean league by Aratus, even though some of its inhabitants favoured an alliance with Elis.<sup>41</sup> The restored exiles who betrayed Cynaetha to the Aetolian raiding force are usually seen as members of the lower classes who hoped for a re-distribution of property. In light of the earlier attempt by some inhabitants of Cynaetha to ally with Elis the possibility exists that the exiles had been created in the aftermath of Cynaetha's entry into the Achaean league. Polybius' reference to the re-distribution of property may be linked to the desire of these restored exiles to regain on their return the land they had possessed before their exile.<sup>42</sup>

So, although Polybius portrays the Peloponnese in his histories as unified under the Achaean league to the extent that it came to resemble a single *polis*, we only have his assertion that it was. Given the total dominance that Megalopolitans held over the office of Achaean *strategos* between 205 and 181BC, the

---

<sup>40</sup> Polyb.4.17.4. "Constant mutual massacres, banishment, the robbery of people's goods, and even the redistribution of lands". Eckstein (1995) pp.136-38 discusses this passage in the context of Polybius' fear of the lower orders. Polybius makes no mention of this as a factor, suggesting that the Cynaethans, living as they did in the harshest part of Arcadia, needed gentleness and mildness in their educational system that music could supply (Polyb.4.21.3-5.).

<sup>41</sup> Scholten (2000) pp. 288-94.

<sup>42</sup> For the events surrounding Cynaetha's earlier forced entry into the Achaean league see Walbank (1936) pp. 67-71.



period covering Rome's initial involvement in the Greek world, that which Polybius presents as the Achaean league's policy was actually carried out entirely by Megalopolitans such as Philopoemen, Aristaenus, Diophanes and Lycortas. It would appear from the unwilling entry of Sparta, Elis and Messene into the Achaean league between 192-188BC that there was a close degree of co-operation between the Megalopolitans and Flamininus and that the Achaean league benefited from Aetolia's defeat by absorbing its allies in the Peloponnese.

Does Polybius' assertion in his histories that he was an Achaean and his stress on the unity of the Achaean league have any implications for our understanding of Roman imperialism? During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, European imperial powers exploited ethnic and religious divisions amongst the indigenous peoples they came into contact with so that their subjects remained divided and were unable to unite in resistance against colonial rule. During their conquest of Italy, the Romans had exploited differences between various Italian peoples, playing off the different ethnic groups against each other in order to gain mastery over the peninsula. Although it is tempting to suppose that in the late Hellenistic period the boundaries of the *polis* became more permeable, leading to the development of *koina*, political federations that united previously disparate peoples, it must be asked whether or not these institutions were able to overcome old rivalries. In the Peloponnese, the Eleans

maintained close links with their mythical kinsmen in Aetolia, despite the fact that they were separated from each other by the Gulf of Corinth, and fought alongside the Aetolian league during the Social and First Macedonian Wars, and later against Rome in 192BC. When Elis subsequently became a member of the Achaean league did it accept its membership willingly? Or did the Spartans willingly accept membership of an Achaean league dominated for long periods by Megalopolitans?

### Polybius, Rome and *anacyclosis*

Polybius gives an account of Greek society that stresses the unified nature of the Peloponnese under the Achaean league though his narrative suggests that communities within it retained many of their old animosities and allegiances. Again, one should question Polybius' motivation in writing his histories, especially his attitude towards Rome. This section will contend that Polybius presents Rome in idealised terms during its conquest of the Mediterranean world because he wished to instruct his readers as to how the process of *anacyclosis*, a cycle that *poleis* experienced in their systems of government, had been disrupted there. This suspension created the circumstances that resulted in Rome achieving mastery over the Mediterranean world.

*Anacyclosis* is frequently seen as an attempt by Polybius to explain the Roman constitution to his Greek readership in terms that would be familiar to them. Should it be seen only in this, isolated context? Polybius was writing *historia*, a type of literature that derived from the Greek oral and epic traditions, with the stated purpose of explaining Roman imperialism to his readership. At the outset of his work, Polybius stresses that the Roman system of government was vital in allowing Rome to gain control over the Mediterranean world, and at the start of his third book, he re-iterates the vital role that Rome's system of polity played in its conquests.<sup>43</sup> He devoted his sixth book entirely to a discussion of the Roman system of government; the significance of this factor in his wider work cannot be ignored.

Again, one should remember the extent to which *historia* had developed by the time that Polybius was writing.<sup>44</sup> By the fourth century, historians had already begun to divide their works into books. If one looks at the way that Polybius devised his work, there appears to be a hexadic structure in his first thirty books, Polybius' intention being to have five books discussing events around the Mediterranean and then a book consisting of a digression devoted to a particular subject.<sup>45</sup> The first five books are an introduction, dealing with the First Two

---

<sup>43</sup> Polyb.3.2.6.

<sup>44</sup> Derow (1994) p.84 remarks on Polybius' professionalism.

<sup>45</sup> See Hornblower (1994) p.16-17, which suggests that possibly Polybius' geographical book was intended to be twenty-four instead of thirty-four.



Punic Wars and the expansion of the Achaean league, ending with the conclusion of the Social War and Philip V's alliance with Hannibal. At that point Polybius introduces his account of the Roman system of government in book six. Between books seven and eleven Polybius deals with events in Greece after the alliance between Philip V and Hannibal and events in Italy during the Second Punic War, digressing on the role and purpose of *historia* in book twelve. Books thirteen down till seventeen deal with events leading up to the end of the Second Punic War and the turn eastwards of the victorious Roman Republic. Book eighteen, although incomplete, in its surviving fragments concentrates on the period in Greece between 198-196BC, immediately after the alliance between the Achaean league and Rome, containing Flamininus' declaration of Freedom. In books nineteen till twenty-three Polybius presents Rome and the Achaean league acting almost as equals. Polybius' twenty-fourth book, again far from complete, relates the circumstances surrounding the breakdown of this relationship, Callicrates' embassy to Rome and his decision to tell the Romans that they should regard the Greeks as subjects. Books twenty-six to twenty-nine deal with the decline in the Achaean league and growing Roman encroachment into its affairs until the battle of Pydna which occurs in book thirty.

In the extension to his work, <sup>in</sup> books thirty-one to thirty nine Polybius presents *tyche* as the supreme force governing human affairs and men's behaviour, corrupting the senate and Roman

youth, and in Greece, dominated by corrupt men such as Callicrates, Polybius' *historia* culminates with the destruction of Corinth.

The intention of this section will be to examine the concept of *anacyclosis* in Polybius' histories, to find out if it was an attempt to rationalise the Roman conquest for his readers. By stressing that Rome's success had occurred because the systems of government in Greek states had been undergoing a decline, Polybius was indicating to his readers that subjection to Roman rule had occurred because Rome was temporarily superior to Greek states where the process of *anacyclosis* had not been suspended. As Polybius made evident, eventually *anacyclosis* would resume in the Roman system of government, thereby destroying the circumstances that had led to Rome achieving domination over the Mediterranean world. As Rome was re-entering a period of decline, the Achaean league, having suffered the final destructive event that occurred at the end of the cycle of *anacyclosis*, would have emerged renewed.

Assessing Polybius' attitude towards Rome is difficult, since at no point does Polybius clearly state how he regarded Roman rule over the Mediterranean world. In explaining his decision to extend his work from the battle of Pydna as originally conceived down to the sack of Corinth, Polybius stated that he hoped that his work would serve the purpose of explaining Roman rule since:



*It is evident that contemporaries will thus be able to see clearly whether the Roman government is acceptable or not, and future generations whether it should be considered to have been worthy of praise and admiration or rather of blame.*<sup>46</sup>

Although Polybius provides the evidence, he leaves it up to his readers how they should judge Rome's rule, without adding his own opinion which has been seen by various scholars as pro-Roman, anti-Roman, impressed, embittered, ambivalent and cynical.<sup>47</sup> At times Polybius' presentation of Rome appears almost contradictory. He portrayed the Greeks as regarding Rome as an aggressive power set on conquest and more importantly, as barbarian during the First Macedonian War.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, there is no doubt that Polybius also portrays Rome during its struggle with Carthage in the part of his histories that survive, his first five books, in almost ideal terms and individuals like Flamininus and Scipio are depicted in a favourable light.<sup>49</sup> In book six of his histories, which is almost

---

<sup>46</sup> Polyb.3.4.7.

<sup>47</sup> Erskine (2000) p. 1382.

<sup>48</sup> See Walbank (1985) p.150-1 for a discussion of five passages where Polybius has Greeks argue that Rome was an aggressive, barbarian state.

<sup>49</sup> For an example of Polybius describing the Romans as barbarians in a direct voice, see Campion's discussion of Polyb.12.4b.1-c.1. *Histos* (2000), dealing with Polybius' account of Timaeus' depiction of the October horse ceremony, which was celebrated to commemorate the disaster at Troy. Polybius states that Timaeus is incorrect to link this with the fall of Troy, and that the Roman custom was a common practice amongst all the



intact, Polybius gives a glowing account of the Roman system of government and institutions, drawing attention to its many virtuous features. Scholars who in the past have doubted the aggressive and imperialistic nature of the Roman Republic have drawn attention to a supposed contradiction in Polybius, whose narrative presents not Rome, but rather its enemies as being responsible for starting many of the wars they fought.<sup>50</sup> Walbank suggested that despite Polybius' assertion that Rome was aggressive, his interpretation was not only factually incorrect, but could be shown to be from his own text. He argued that Polybius stated that Rome was aggressive because he assumed that it was the duty of any sovereign state to expand.<sup>51</sup> However despite his glowing account of Roman institutions, Polybius is careful to point out to his readers that the Romans are different from the Greeks. In the case of Roman religious practices, Polybius points out how the Roman elite manipulated

---

barbarians. However, Polybius' intention was to prove that Timaeus' reasoning was wrong. It does not necessarily imply that he did not accept that the Romans were Trojans.

<sup>50</sup> The supposed contradiction has been refuted by Derow (1979) pp. 1-15.

<sup>51</sup> See Walbank (1963) p.10 and (1972) p.163-4 for this argument. Harris (1979) p. 114 points out that after 216BC many of the vital parts of Polybius' text are missing. He suggests that had we access to the full text, possibly in the missing sections Polybius would have given some details about the widening of Roman ambitions as the Carthaginian effort failed, and the Romans extended their power into Spain and Africa.

superstition, a typical barbarian characteristic, to keep the masses under control.<sup>52</sup>

Walbank argued that although Polybius was cautiously anti-Roman before his detention and had a cynical attitude towards Roman policy during his time in Italy, the catastrophic events of 146BC changed his attitude into one of acceptance of the Roman presence.<sup>53</sup> Polybius' connections with members of the Roman elite may have altered his attitude. Polybius informs his readers that at the beginning of his detention he became acquainted with the young Scipio Aemilianus through the loan of some books. This action, Polybius claimed, grew into a friendship that allowed him to spend much of the time he spent in detention at Rome itself, unlike the other hostages who were distributed throughout Italy, Polybius presenting himself as the younger man's mentor.<sup>54</sup> Aemilianus was the son of Aemilius Paullus, the victor over Perseus and the adoptive grandson of Scipio Africanus; Polybius presents himself as moving within the highest circles in Roman political life during his detention.

The Romans also appear in parts of Polybius' histories not as barbarians.<sup>55</sup> During the Second Punic War, Polybius portrays the Romans as having many characteristics that would be considered as being typically Greek, such as rationality, self-

---

<sup>52</sup> Polyb.6.56.7-9.

<sup>53</sup> Walbank (1972) p.82-3.

<sup>54</sup> Polyb.31.23.4.

<sup>55</sup> Polyb.39.2.1-3.

sufficiency and discipline. Polybius portrays the Carthaginians during this conflict as having typical barbarian characteristics, leading some to suggest that Polybius felt the Romans were honorary Greeks.<sup>56</sup> In the events surrounding Corinth's destruction in 146BC, the event that Walbank suggests made Polybius pro-Roman, Polybius presents the Romans behaving in a rational fashion; it is his fellow Achaeans whom he depicts as irrational.

This does not imply that Polybius admired Roman institutions or accepted Roman rule. Polybius conceived his histories as a means of providing his Greek readers with a rational explanation as to why the Romans were successful; he could hardly portray them in anything but a positive light during their conquest of Greece.<sup>57</sup> In his histories Polybius assumed the task of explaining to his readership something that many of them probably considered a complete and utter reversal of the natural order.<sup>58</sup> Greeks considered themselves distinct from other people, viewing non-Greeks, whom they called barbarians, as irrational, brutal, cruel and superstitious;

---

<sup>56</sup> See Erskine (2000) p. 174.

<sup>57</sup> Walbank points out that Polybius never, in the surviving parts of his work, describes the Romans as barbarians in a direct voice, though he frequently has others make this claim in speeches. Walbank (1985) pp. 152-3.

<sup>58</sup> Walbank (1972) pp. 3-6 collects a number of passages which indicate that Polybius intended his work primarily for a Greek readership. Polyb.31.22.8. states that Polybius



characteristics that Polybius shows in Roman behaviour at various stages of his work.<sup>59</sup> Polybius' histories had to address an important question for his readers. Why, if the Greeks had the characteristics they believed themselves to possess, were they subject to an alien and barbarian people?<sup>60</sup> This was the question that Polybius intended his histories to give a satisfactory answer to.

As Polybius stated, from 220BC onwards, the fates of the Achaean league and Rome had become linked.<sup>61</sup> Polybius argued that a cycle occurred in the development of the systems of government in all *poleis*, which he termed *anacyclosis*.<sup>62</sup> The initial phase occurs at a time when some great disaster has left men weak and living in a primitive condition. A single strong individual then emerges, forcing the people to obey his dictates, a phase that Polybius describes as *monarchia*. During this period men gradually develop a sense of duty and justice from rearing their children, from whom they expect gratitude and obedience, which leads to a sense of right and wrong developing. This in

---

knows that Romans will examine his histories, but does not mean that he wrote for both audiences.

<sup>59</sup> See Erskine (2000) pp.165-82 for an examination of Polybius' depiction of typical barbarian characteristics in Romans regarding religious practice and the sacking of cities.

<sup>60</sup> For a discussion of the Romans as barbarians in Greek international political discourse, see Deininger (1971) pp. 21-37.

<sup>61</sup> Polyb.5.33.1-5.

<sup>62</sup> For Polybius' theory of constitutional change see Polyb.6.6.1-9.10.

turn leads to monarchy developing, the king ruling with the support of his subjects.<sup>63</sup> According to Polybius, the king's descendants, because of rank and privilege, will eventually begin to commit acts of violence against their subjects, and monarchy will give way to tyranny, until eventually the tyrant is overthrown when his rule becomes unendurable.<sup>64</sup> Aristocracy replaces monarchy in the second phase of *anacyclosis* but the descendants of the initial aristocratic leaders abuse their position, leading to an oligarchy alongside growing abuses of the citizenry. Eventually this type of government is overthrown in favour of democracy.<sup>65</sup>

At the end of the cycle, Polybius argued that the citizens of the democracy become so accustomed to freedom and equality that they no longer value them; violence erupts, leading to mob-rule and the cycle culminates in a single great destructive event. In the end anarchy prevails as it did at the beginning and the cycle of *anacyclosis* resumes.<sup>66</sup>

However, as Polybius points out, Rome, along with certain other states, had managed to achieve a mixture of these three basic forms of government in such a manner that their system of government was kept in a state of equilibrium, delaying

---

<sup>63</sup> Polyb.6.6.1-12.

<sup>64</sup> Polyb.6.8.4-6.

<sup>65</sup> Polyb.6.9.1-3.

<sup>66</sup> Polyb.6.9.9, "Until they degenerate again into perfect savages and find once more a master and monarch."



*anacyclosis*.<sup>67</sup> Sparta had achieved it through the actions of Lycurgus, and it had developed in Rome through a process of trial and error. But, as Polybius makes clear, sooner or later all mixed systems of government in *poleis* lose their balance and *anacyclosis* resumes. Carthage, like Rome, had a mixed system of government at one stage but it eventually broke down, Carthage entering into a period of decline that eventually led to its destruction by the Romans in 146BC. Polybius has Scipio Aemilianus voice his fear that the same fate would happen to Rome as he watched Carthage burn.<sup>68</sup>

Polybius' account of *anacyclosis* is seen by many historians as a clumsy attempt to impose a Greek political theory onto the mixed Roman constitution, suggesting that it was a "simple-minded notion of a predictable and unchanging cycle of constitutional forms".<sup>69</sup> Was Polybius' account of *anacyclosis* merely a device to explain the Roman system of government to his Greek readers? Or rather was it a theory that could be applied to the systems of government in all *poleis* which would explain to Polybius' Greek readership why they found

---

<sup>67</sup> Polyb. 6.10.1-14.

<sup>68</sup> Polyb.38.22.1-3. "A glorious moment, Polybius; but I have a dread foreboding that some day this doom will be pronounced upon my own country". It would be difficult to mention an utterance more statesmanlike and more profound".

<sup>69</sup> See Cornell (2001) p. 47; also note 26, where he states that, " I should also emphasise that I agree with those who draw a sharp distinction between Polybius the second-rate philosopher and Polybius the first-rate historian."



themselves living under barbarian rule? Polybius' intention in book six was not merely to explain the working of the Roman constitution to his readers; it was to explain how Rome reached the position that allowed it to achieve mastery over the Mediterranean world.<sup>70</sup>

In his histories Polybius had to explain to his readers why the natural order had been reversed, the irrational Romans ruling the rational Greeks. His portrayal of Hellenic behaviour was bound to reflect the decline that had allowed the Romans to gain mastery over Greece. Although not a *polis*, similarities to one undergoing a transformation through the workings of *anacyclosis* could be seen in Macedonia where Philip V began his reign by showing the potential, according to Polybius, to be the greatest of all the Antigonid monarchs. But, shortly before Rome became involved in Greek affairs there was, as Polybius makes evident, a change in his character for the worse and he was transformed into a tyrant capable of carrying out the most heinous of crimes.<sup>71</sup> As Polybius states:

---

<sup>70</sup> Powell, (2001) p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> For Polybius' digression <sup>on</sup> Philip V's change in character, see Polyb. 7.11.1-12.

*Henceforth, as if he had had a taste of human blood and of the slaughter and betrayal of his allies, he did not change from a man into a wolf, as in the Arcadian tale cited by Plato, but he changed from a king into a cruel tyrant.*<sup>72</sup>

Polybius depicts Philip V as a drunk who committed adultery with the wives of his friends. Perseus, who is described by Polybius as a miser and a physical coward, then succeeded him.<sup>73</sup> Polybius' rather judgmental account of Philip V's reign resembles the depiction he gave of monarchy when *anacyclosis* transforms this institution into tyranny, producing monarchs who:

*Received the office by hereditary succession and found their safety now provided for...they gave way to their appetites owing to this abundance, and came to think that the rulers must be distinguished from their subjects by a particular dress, that there should be a particular luxury and variety in the presentation of their food and drink, and that they should meet with no denial in the pursuit of their love affairs, however lawless.*<sup>74</sup>

*Tyche* played an important factor in the destruction of Macedonia, taking revenge on Philip V for the crimes that he had

---

<sup>72</sup> Polyb.7.13.7.

<sup>73</sup> For Polybius' depiction of these two monarchs, see Eckstein (1995) p. 261 n.80, and p.286 n.3 for the accusation of drunkenness in Philip V and Antiochus.

<sup>74</sup> Polyb.6.7.7.

committed.<sup>75</sup> Undoubtedly *tyche* had favoured the Romans. They were fortunate enough to fight against and defeat the Macedonians at a time when the Antigonid monarchy was degenerating into a tyranny, as Polybius stated all monarchies eventually did under the pressures of *anacyclosis*, at a point when Rome's system of government was unaffected by this process.

Cicero looked back on the process that led to the formation of Rome's mixed constitution in the First Century BC, suggesting, as Polybius did, that Rome had acquired its mixed system of government in or around 449BC. However, Cicero contended that despite its difficulties from 133BC onwards, Rome still retained a mixed system of government.<sup>76</sup> Polybius stresses that *anacyclosis* was merely delayed in the Roman system of government and would resume. Polybius depicts Rome as an aggressive state, and during the First Macedonian War his histories portray Greek politicians warning the Aetolian league that the Romans were barbarian aggressors who were exploiting its difficulties to further their imperial ambitions. Nor does Polybius deviate from his belief that Rome was aggressive. He states that unlike the Spartans, who remained essentially bound to the Peloponnese, the Romans aimed for world domination

---

<sup>75</sup> Eckstein (1995) p. 263, commenting on Polyb.15.20.5-8.

<sup>76</sup> Powell (2001) p. 24



from the outset and placed all of their energies into achieving it.<sup>77</sup>

As he states:

*It is quite natural, that having been schooled in such great enterprises, they not only boldly threw themselves into gaining the leadership and mastery of the world, but they succeeded in realising their aim.*<sup>78</sup>

It would appear that the Romans were, in Polybius' opinion, exploiting their newly acquired territories. Rome's decision to seize the gold and silver from Syracuse during the Second Punic War was natural; according to Polybius, because the Romans:

*Could not lay claim to world power without taking away the resources of others and appropriating them for themselves.*<sup>79</sup>

However, Rome achieved its mastery over the Mediterranean world at a time when *anacyclosis* was suspended in its system of government, and had remained in force in other states that had systems of government similar to *poleis*, like the Achaean league. Polybius' account of Roman behaviour had to account for how *anacyclosis*' suspension had produced a society that had been able to overcome Greek states like the Achaean league, which were undergoing a decline.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> For Polybius' comments on Spartan imperialism, see Polyb. 6.50.5.

<sup>78</sup> Polyb.1.63.

<sup>79</sup> Polyb.9.10. 11.

<sup>80</sup> See Polyb. 6. 19.1-42.6, for Polybius' account of the Roman military system. Polyb.6 56. 6-15 for Roman religious practices.

As for Polybius' presentation of events in the Peloponnese, although events at Corinth in 146BC were undoubtedly destructive, they do not appear to have put an end to Greek resistance to Rome, or have had the finality that Polybius' histories suggest. As a recent re-interpretation of an inscription from Dyme indicates, it would appear that resistance to Rome's presence existed in the immediate aftermath of the Achaean War and that there was no real change in Greece.<sup>81</sup> Although there was no known large-scale revolt against Roman power in the Peloponnese between the destruction of Corinth and Mithridates' invasion, this does not mean that Greeks like Polybius came to accept Roman rule.

Rather, Polybius expected the Roman system of government under which its conquest of Greece had been achieved to suffer as the result of internal decline and external pressures. The implication for his readers was that Roman rule over Greece was not permanent. Polybius believed that Rome had reached its zenith during the Hannibalic War.<sup>82</sup> In his last ten books he depicts the senate's foreign policy as both amoral and immoral and the Roman youth being corrupted by an influx of wealth, leading to idleness and luxury. It appears, as Eckstein argues, that *tyche* was already punishing the Romans since the benefits

---

<sup>81</sup> Kallet-Marx (1995) pp. 129-153.

<sup>82</sup> Powell (2001) p. 23.

of empire were corrupting the very values that had achieved it.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, the final image of Roman behaviour that Polybius presents to his readership is of soldiers playing board games on a priceless work of art during the sack of Corinth, acting in truly barbarian fashion.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps he was suggesting that the resumption of *anacyclosis* in the Roman system of government was not a distant prospect.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, internal decline at Rome would come at a time when the Achaean league, having suffered the catastrophic event that Polybius claimed heralded the end of every cycle of *anacyclosis*, would have emerge renewed.<sup>86</sup>

However, internal decline was not the only result that *anacyclosis* had in its final stages, though it was constant. As Polybius stated, external pressures, although unknown, also played an important role in the eventual descent of the *polis* into anarchy.<sup>87</sup> Politicians like Callicrates had corrupted the Achaean league through the workings of *anacyclosis*; Roman pressure and interference in its affairs also resulted in its destruction. Carthage, which like Rome, at one point possessed a mixed

---

<sup>83</sup> Eckstein (1995) p. 265.

<sup>84</sup> Polyb.39.2.1-3.

<sup>85</sup> Polyb.31.25.2-6.

<sup>86</sup> Polybius' role in the Roman settlement was to ensure that statues of Philopoemen remained intact (Polyb.39.3.4-11). Furthermore, he refused a Roman present of property that Diaeus had owned, and urged his friends not to acquire property owned by the leadership of the rebellion when the Romans sold it (Polyb.39.4.1-5.).

<sup>87</sup> Polyb.6.57.2.



constitution, had been weakened both by its mob and Roman pressure. Yet, although supernatural forces beyond their control had played a vital role in Greek subjection to Roman rule, ultimately Polybius ~~not~~ deny that, what might be described as “free will” was also an important factor. As he stated:

*But as for matters the efficient and final cause of which it is possible to discover we should not, I think, put them down to divine action. For instance, take the following case. In our own time the whole of Greece has been subject to a low birth-rate and a general decline in population, owing to which poleis have become deserted and the land has ceased to yield fruit, although there have neither been continuous wars nor epidemics. If, then, any one had advised us to send and ask the gods about this, and find out what we ought to say or do, to increase in numbers and make our cities more populous, would it not seem absurd, the cause of the evil being evident and the remedy being in our own hands?.... About this it was of no use at all to ask the gods to suggest a means of deliverance from such an evil. For any ordinary man will tell you that the most effectual cure had to be men's own action, in either striving after other objects.... Neither prophets nor magic were here of any service, and the same holds for all particulars.<sup>88</sup>*

---

<sup>88</sup> Polyb.38.17.4-12.

*Tyche* had favoured the Romans during a period when it had been unfavourable to the Greeks. However, Rome's conquest could not be explained solely by supernatural factors; all they had, or could do in the future was create favourable circumstances. Ultimately the Romans had achieved world domination because they had desired it from outset, and had placed all of their resources into achieving it. Now that the circumstances were going to be reversed, the Greeks could not simply rely on internal decline within the Roman system of government; that would occur naturally, but would not be enough. They themselves had to be in a position to exert sufficient pressure on a Roman state weakened through the process of *anacyclosis*. The readership that Polybius intended his histories for, those interested in public life, would only be able to do so if they were able to learn from the events and actions that Polybius outlined, which had resulted in their subjection to Roman rule.

### Polybius' portrayal of the Aetolian league

Polybius' depiction of the Aetolian league and its actions during the Hellenistic period is of a piratical and irrational state bent on wreaking destruction in the Peloponnese. However, it is merely one opinion, and as Rigsby points out in the context of *asylia* decrees, had Polybius been an Aetolian, perhaps scholars today would be assessing the popularity or otherwise of the

Aetolian Empire.<sup>89</sup> As early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Woodhouse, one of the first scholars to study Aetolian topography and archaeology, pondered the question of how much longer childish perception of the Aetolians as a nation of robbers would persist.<sup>90</sup>

Woodhouse's prediction about the course of future scholarship on Aetolia was as accurate as his belief that the long-term consequences of the revival of the Olympic games in Athens in 1896 would be disaster.<sup>91</sup> Polybius clearly depicts the Aetolians and their actions in the Peloponnese in the worst possible fashion. It is merely one view, and given that the Aetolians absorbed many communities from outside their *ethnos* into their league in the late Hellenistic period, it would appear that not all other Greeks held it. Admittedly, aspects of Aetolian society were different from those found elsewhere in Greece during the classical period. These differences do not mean that during the Hellenistic period Aetolian leaders were incapable of conceiving a rational foreign policy.

Yet, if Polybius' account is to be believed, the Aetolian league initiated the Social War merely to satisfy its insatiable desire for plunder in the Peloponnese. When that war was over, Polybius' narrative implies that a continued Aetolian desire to

---

<sup>89</sup> Rigsby (1996) p.17.

<sup>90</sup> Woodhouse (1897) p.50.

<sup>91</sup> Woodhouse (1897) p.51.



amass loot led to their alliance with the Romans during the First Macedonian War.<sup>92</sup>

Polybius' intention in writing history was to instruct. His aim was to show his readers the influence that the suspension of *anacyclosis* had on the Roman system of government, and to contrast it with other states where *tyche* had not been so favourable. His view of the past and presentation of events in the Peloponnese was bound to reflect his intention of presenting the Achaean league as a state in with which the influence of *anacyclosis* could be compared to Rome. *Historia* was for Polybius a means of instructing, and as he stated:

*There are few occasions which admit of setting forth all possible arguments, most admitting only of those brief arguments, which occur to one, and even of these there are certain which are appropriate to contemporaries, others to men of former times, others again to Aetolians, others to Peloponnesians and others to Athenians...Since the needs of the case vary, we have need of special practice and principal in judging how many and which of the possible arguments we should employ, that is to say if we mean to do good rather than harm to our readers.*<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> For Polybius' depiction of Aetolian attitudes at the end of the Social War see Polyb.5.107.5-7.

<sup>93</sup> Polyb.12.25I.4-6.

Does Polybius' failure to explain other viewpoints affect our understanding of events in the Peloponnese prior to Rome's intervention in Greece? If one takes into account the circumstances that led to the decision to request Macedonian assistance against Cleomenes of Sparta, the influx of Arcadian communities such as Megalopolis into the Achaean league appears to have been a decisive factor in the decision to invite Antigonus Doson to re-enter the Peloponnese. Plutarch, although not a contemporary source, had access to now missing works like Aratus' Memoirs. Plutarch's account emphasises Aratus' reluctance to call on Macedonia and mentions his initial decision to request the Aetolian league's assistance before he reluctantly agreed to accept Macedonian support.<sup>94</sup> Aratus had earlier carried out the expansion of the Achaean league into Arcadia in close co-operation with the Aetolian league. The claimed mythical kinship links between the Aetolians and Elis suggests that despite the Gulf of Corinth, the Peloponnese was an area of vital concern to the Aetolian league. These factors indicate that subsequent Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese had a justifiable basis. All are events that Polybius ignores in his *pragmatikê historia*. Polybius expresses definite opinions about Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese; they are merely his own and do not reflect the opinions that may have existed in states like Elis or Sicyon.

---

<sup>94</sup> Plut.*Arat.*41.2-3.



## Conclusion

Traditionally Polybius' narrative has provided a framework for understanding Rome's advent in the Greek world that has largely been accepted, despite its limitations. As Polybius, who had strong opinions about the writing of history admits, the purpose of *historia pragmatikê* was to instruct; he intended his histories to be read by anybody trying to cope with the vicissitudes of *tyche* since, as he stated, knowledge of the past helps in the present. Does this intention distort our understanding of how Rome came to conquer the Greek world?

Polybius clearly believed that the Roman system of government under which its successes had been achieved would decline. Corinth's destruction in 146BC may have caused Polybius to assist the Romans. This does not mean that Polybius abandoned his belief that the Roman Republic would eventually decline into anarchy through a resumption of *anacyclosis* in its system of government, a decline that had occurred in the Achaean league during the period covered by his histories. Polybius emphasises that the destruction of Corinth was the single greatest misfortune ever to happen to the Greeks, even compared to the Persian invasions.<sup>95</sup> It was exactly the sort of destructive event that Polybius claimed heralded the end of a cycle of *anacyclosis* in democracies like the Achaean league after

---

<sup>95</sup> See Polyb.38.2.1-5.



they had been corrupted by mob-rule and dishonest politicians, a situation that he describes in the events surrounding the Achaean War.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, there is Polybius' emphasis on the unity of the Achaean league throughout his histories, a unity he compares to that found in a *polis*. Although Polybius describes a situation whereby the various *ethne* of the Peloponnese united to form one *ethnos*, scholars have long doubted this, suggesting that the larger members of the Achaean league such as Corinth would have acted in their own interests as circumstances dictated.<sup>97</sup> It would appear from the predominance of Megalopolitans in the office of Achaean *strategos*, that they often acted in accordance with Arcadian interests, rather than those of the entire league.

Polybius clearly differentiates *pragmatikê historia* from other types of history, stating that since his writings were the result of personal experience, he would leave matters like foundation myths and genealogies to other historians. One of the things that Polybius criticises Timaeus' histories for, his close attention to the mythological aspect of the relations between states, appears to have been an important factor in interstate relations during the Hellenistic period. The closeness of the relationship between Elis and Aetolia during the Hellenistic period, despite their

---

<sup>96</sup> See Polyb.38.12.4-5.

<sup>97</sup> For the *ethne* of the Peloponnese merging into one *ethnos* see Polyb.2.37.7-38.4. Walbank (1985) p.36 takes a slightly more cautious approach towards Polybius' assertions.

separation by the Gulf of Corinth, suggests that Polybius' decision to ignore claims of kinship in his histories masks one of the reasons for Aetolian intervention in the Peloponnese. Essentially Polybius' presents the evidence in accordance with the political message that he wished his contemporary Greek readership to draw from his writings. That the Roman conquest was a temporary situation that had occurred because of capricious nature of *tyche*, and his readership should look to and learn from mistakes made in the past, drawing lessons that would allow them to renew their own society.

Polybius, like many historians, seems to have interpreted the past through his understanding of the present. The events surrounding the Third Macedonian War found Polybius forcibly removed to Italy and detained there for sixteen years. On his return he witnessed the destruction of Corinth in the aftermath of a failed revolt against Rome. Polybius' need to explain to his Greek readers how they now found themselves ruled by a power that many of them probably considered as alien and barbarian appears to distort present-day understanding of his writings.

## Chapter Two

### Polybius' presentation of the Peloponnese in his *pragmatikê historia*; Aetolia's kinship relationship with Elis and Cleomenes' revolution.

#### Introduction

*For most of the Aetolians themselves are not Greek. The countries of the Agrae, the Apodotae and the Amphilochians are not Greek.*<sup>1</sup>

In some respects this supposed remark by Philip V to Flamininus captures the problem of how Polybius' attitude has influenced modern scholarship on Aetolia. Located in north-western Greece in close proximity to peoples such as the Illyrians, the Aetolian league has acquired a reputation amongst Hellenistic historians as a nation of pirates located at the periphery of the Greek world.<sup>2</sup> This attitude is seen as a natural continuation from the classical period; Thucydides described the Aetolians as a warlike *ethnos* living in primitive conditions.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Polyb.18.5.7-9. Walbank (1967) p.556 suggests that these were the actual words Philip used. Woodhouse (1897) p.79 earlier pointed to the alliteration.

<sup>2</sup> For Walbank's comments on Aetolian behaviour, see CAH Vol.7 (2ed) pp. 232. See also Will's remarks in the same volume, p.107.

<sup>3</sup> Thuc.3.94.4-5. Eur. *Phoen* L.138 describes the clothing of Tydeus as half barbarian. Antonetti (1990) pp.113-43 examines the development of the hostile image of the Aetolians in Athenian drama and comedy, drawing attention to the role that the Aetolian defeat of Athenian forces played in its development. Scholten (2000) p.5. n.12



However it is from Polybius that most of our knowledge about the Aetolians derives and they receive extremely harsh treatment in his histories. According to Polybius, such was the Aetolian addiction to piracy that if two other states were at war they would take advantage of the situation and plunder both sides even if they were not involved in the conflict.<sup>4</sup> There are few character faults that Polybius does not accuse the Aetolians of having: violence and aggression (4.3.5.), cruelty (4.18.7-9), impiety (4.62.2.), haughtiness (5.64.8.), inhumanity (4.67.3-4), and cowardice (4.79.1.). Polybius depicts the Aetolians as natural revolutionaries (13.1.2), spendthrifts (13.1.1.), liars who find plundering and raiding habitual (4.3.1:16.2) and a nation whose obsession with looting causes them to lose battles and friends (4.29.47.). According to Polybius, the ultimate goal of the Aetolian league was the conquest of Greece (2.49.3.).<sup>5</sup>

Plausible explanations have been advanced for Polybius' attitude. It is suggested that perhaps Aetolian society evolved differently from elsewhere in Greece because the Aetolians lost control over their coastline to the Achaean league during the classical period.<sup>6</sup> Grainger suggests that the Aetolian role in the

---

suggests that the stereotype was based on some generally recognisable abnormality in behaviour.

<sup>4</sup> Polyb.18.4.8;5.2.

<sup>5</sup> This list of crimes is listed by Sacks (1975) p. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 12 "The rugged isolation environment of Old Aitolia did little to promote change away from these earlier, more freewheeling socio-economic concepts".

defence of Delphi in 279BC and their constant references to this action in their propaganda might have annoyed other Greeks, causing them to remember Aetolian crimes.<sup>7</sup> Finally there is their position at the fringe of the Greek world as a possible explanation for Polybius' invective, the Aetolians appearing to him as hill men.<sup>8</sup>

The Aetolian league is not the only state that Polybius describes in negative terms. Of extreme relevance for understanding the situation in the Peloponnese is Polybius' depiction of Sparta, especially Nabis' rule there. Polybius portrays Nabis' regime in the worst possible light, alleging that Nabis used an instrument of torture built in the image of his wife to extort money from wealthy Spartans and shared out their wives and daughters amongst his supporters as he shared out the land.<sup>9</sup> As with his depiction of the Aetolian league, plausible arguments are advanced to account for Polybius' bias, in particular his concern that rule by the masses threatened social stability.

However, despite Polybius' depiction of it, the Aetolian league played an important role in Greek history, for example its defence of Delphi against the Celts in 279BC, and during the Hellenistic period it included many communities in northern-

---

<sup>7</sup> Grainger (1999) p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Grainger (1999) p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Polyb.13. 7.1-11; 13.6.2, 16.13.1-2. See Eckstein (1995) p. 133.



western Greece in its league, along with controlling the shrine at Delphi.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Aetolian league was the first state in Greece to ally with Rome, and the first to challenge its influence.

The intention of this chapter is to examine whether Polybius' depiction of both the Aetolian league and Sparta during the Hellenistic period is dispassionate. Or whether Polybius' regional perspective as an Arcadian and the rivalry between various ethnic interests in the Peloponnese account for his partisan representation of the Aetolian league's actions in that region. It will contend that Aetolian actions and interventions in the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period had a consistent basis and that Polybius' perspective on events and concern with the situation at the time he was writing masks the true situation in the Peloponnese.

### Aetolia's relationship with the Peloponnese.

This section will be a brief description of the geographical relationship between Aetolia and the Peloponnese. The geographical structure of Aetolia is relatively simple, consisting of two distinct regions; the coastal plain around Calydon and Pleuron, and the area around Lake Thermon with its mountainous hinterland. Despite Aetolia's separation from the

---

<sup>10</sup> See Flacelière (1938) for the Aetolian presence at Delphi. See also Champion (1996) pp. 315-28.



Peloponnese by the Gulf of Corinth, the geography of the region suggests that connections between the two existed.

Strabo describes Aetolia as an area divided into two distinct regions.<sup>11</sup> The first is “old” Aetolia, containing the area around the coastal plain; the second “acquired” Aetolia, referring to the area around Lake Thermon and the mountainous interior. Although Strabo’s terminology comes from the Homeric tradition about Aetolia, it rightly points to the differences between the various component parts of Aetolia. The river system and the influence of the last ice age have created two distinct areas in Aetolia that are at the same time connected with each other.

We shall start at the coastal plain, an area that poses a number of problems. Firstly there is the question of how far it could be said to be open to contact with the Peloponnese. From the coastline, the relative proximity of the Peloponnese, about ten kilometres distant, is obvious.<sup>12</sup> A lagoon dominates the Aetolian coastline, the result of extensive silting from the river network in this region.<sup>13</sup> In antiquity this situation manifests itself in the inability of the Aetolians to develop a commercial port and the significant role that harbours such as Naupactus played in the Aetolian league’s strategic calculations.

---

<sup>11</sup> Strabo C450.

<sup>12</sup> Bommeljé (1988) p. 312 states that until the Second World War, shepherds from Aetolia were more likely to bring their flocks to markets in Patras than Agrinio.

<sup>13</sup> Woodhouse (1897) p. 54 and Antonetti (1990) p. 31.

As one proceeds inland the situation changes. Away from the coastline the coastal plain changes, with agriculture, aided by the alluvial soils deposited by the river network, playing a significant role.<sup>14</sup> This gave the area agricultural self-sufficiency during antiquity and it has the highest concentration of urban centres in Aetolia, containing the two most important settlements, Calydon and Pleuron. It is in this region that the mythological traditions concerning the Aetolian *ethnos* are centred.<sup>15</sup> The coastal plain is linked with the rest of Aetolia through the pass at Kleisura and from there on to the rest of northern Greece. The coastal plain is somewhat focused onto the Peloponnese and isolated from the rest of Aetolia. This sense of distinctiveness seems to have manifested itself with the development of a religious centre at Calydon, dedicated to Artemis Laphria, to act as a focus for the communities on the coastal plain.<sup>16</sup> This site may have been an attempt by the coastal communities to try and counter balance the dominance of the inland areas.<sup>17</sup> When the site fell into disuse, Pausanias informs us that the sacred objects were moved to Patrae in Achaea, suggesting connections with the Peloponnese.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Woodhouse (1897) p. 23-41, Antonetti (1990) pp. 19-23.

<sup>15</sup> Payne (1925-6) pp.124-132.

<sup>16</sup> Antonetti (1990) p. 234.

<sup>17</sup> Morgan (1990) p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Paus.7.18.8-13. Patrae was the only Greek *polis* to aid the Aetolians in 279BC, Paus 7.18.5.



Potentially the most interesting reference about the distinct nature of the coastal region comes from Thucydides' account of the Athenian expedition to Aetolia in 426BC. After meeting fierce Aetolian resistance, the Athenians and their allies were forced to retreat to Naupactus. A Spartan force that had been sent to assist the Aetolians saw this development and realising that they did not have the forces necessary to take Naupactus, according to Thucydides:

*Went into the country that used to be called Aeolis and is now called Calydon and Pleuron- also to other places in that area, and to Proschium in Aetolia.*<sup>19</sup>

This reference has provoked much debate, since it implies that Thucydides regarded the coastal region as distinct from the rest of Aetolia. Beloch and Wilamowitz both argued that a clear distinction had to be made between Homeric and historic Aetolia.<sup>20</sup> According to Beloch, Calydon and Pleuron were independent *poleis* during Homeric times and Thucydides' reference to Aeolis reflects their Homeric origins. Wilamowitz argued that after the war between the Aetolians and the Curetes recorded in mythology, the Curetes ruled Aetolia until they were driven away by a mountain people who assumed their name, and that Thucydides' reference to Aeolis is a remnant of these events. Kirsten discusses the problem at length from an

---

<sup>19</sup> Thuc.3.102.5. The punctuation follows Hornblower (1991) p.516.

<sup>20</sup> Beloch (1897) p. 667-672



archaeological viewpoint, suggesting that in the sub-Mycenean period groups of Aetolian settlers moved from the Peloponnese to the coastal area of Aetolia. Kirsten suggests that one should distinguish the Aetolians who moved to Elis, but are mentioned in the Iliad, from the later ones who took over the coastal area, displacing the settlers who had brought Mycenean culture from the Peloponnese. Kirsten suggests that Thucydides was simply using a legendary name from the area.<sup>21</sup>

There are a number of problems with these arguments. All assume that the Homeric tradition can be taken at face value and that the Dorian migrations actually happened. Bommeljé more recently argued that Thucydides' reference to Aeolis indicates that this area was under the control of the Achaean league.<sup>22</sup> Bommeljé contends that since both Calydon and Pleuron were at various stages members of the Achaean league, that the Achaean league controlled the Aetolian coastline at this point.<sup>23</sup> Bommeljé is undoubtedly correct in pointing to the close links between the coastal communities of Aetolia and the Peloponnese. This does not necessarily mean that *poleis* like Calydon and Pleuron were Achaean. Calydon may have been a

---

<sup>21</sup> Kirsten (1952) pp. 241-242

<sup>22</sup> Bommeljé (1988) pp 307-314. Scholten (2000) pp.12-13 follows Bommeljé, suggesting that the loss of the Aetolian coastline to the Achaean league may have caused the Aetolians to develop in isolation from the rest of Greece, and retain archaic era attitudes towards plundering.

<sup>23</sup> Xen. *Hell* 4.6.1. Paus. 7.11.3.

member of the Achaean league in 389BC; that does not imply that it was in 426BC. The sole reference to Pleuron's membership of the Achaean league is its request to leave, suggesting an unwilling association on its part with the Achaean league. What appears more likely is that Aetolian communities on the coastal plain had extensive links with the Peloponnese, not that their inhabitants were ethnically Achaean.

What implications does this have for our understanding of Polybius' depiction of Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese? Although communities centred on Lake Thermon and the surrounding mountains may have had little or no contact with the Peloponnese, both Calydon and Pleuron had. Though not representative of the league as a whole, because of the fertile nature of this region and its large population, the inhabitants of this area must have had a significant role in determining the policy followed by the Aetolian league. Assuming that the Aetolian *strategos* would act with the collective interests of the Aetolian *ethnos* as a whole in mind, any change in the Peloponnese that impinged on relations between it and the coastal communities of the Aetolian league would be reflected in his decisions.

## Mythical kinship links between the Aetolian league and the Peloponnese.

The geographical structure of the region suggests that the coastal area of Aetolia had links with the Peloponnese, though the evidence is at best circumstantial. However, recent epigraphic evidence has brought to light the possibility that kinship links in the ancient world may have been more important than previously believed. Polybius makes very little mention of kinship relationships in his histories, although he was aware of them, stating that since his intention was to provide a history that would be of practical use to his readers, he would ignore this factor.<sup>24</sup> For most of the Hellenistic period the Aetolian league and Elis were allied, though Polybius gives no explanation as to why these two states co-operated with each other. This alliance, especially its closeness, has been noted; very little thought has been placed into why Elis would maintain such strong links with a state that Polybius describes as piratical.<sup>25</sup> My argument in this section will be that the close relationship between Elis and the Aetolian league, and subsequent Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period were

---

<sup>24</sup> See Polyb. 5.76.11. "The Selgians after nearly losing their country owing to the impious treachery of Logbasis, preserved it by their own valour and disgraced neither their liberty nor their kinship with the Spartans". See Polyb. 9.2.1-7 for Polybius' attitude to kinship links in the writing of history.

<sup>25</sup> Larsen (1975) pp. 161 suggests that the Aetolians were in absolute control over Elis.



linked to a belief held by both the Eleans and Aetolians that they shared a common mythical heritage.

The Xanthos/Cytenion inscription is the obvious starting point for a discussion of Aetolian attitudes towards kinship relations. The inscription itself deals with the appeal made by Cytenion to Xanthos in Lycia asking for financial aid to repair damage caused to its walls by earlier Macedonian attacks and an earthquake. The inscription recording the appeal and the response stresses the ancient bonds that tied the two *poleis* together.<sup>26</sup> The description of the relationship between the Dorian peoples can be found throughout the appeal and is stressed in lines 73-79.<sup>27</sup> Should the document be taken at face value? Cytenion was a small settlement about twenty-four kilometres north of Delphi subject to the control of the Aetolian league. In the document, dated to some time after 205BC, the inhabitants of Cytenion sought and received the permission of the Aetolian assembly before making their appeal.<sup>28</sup> There was a time lapse between the destruction of the walls and the appeal for aid and Bousquet suggests that the inhabitants of Cytenion

---

<sup>26</sup> For the text see SEG XXXVIII.1476. For a translation of the document into French see Bousquet (1988) p.16ff. See Erskine (1997) pp. 133-6.

<sup>27</sup> Hornblower (1996) pp.71-72 points out that Dorian *syngeneia* was important to all the states involved.

<sup>28</sup> Walbank (1989) p. 192 dates the destruction caused by the forces of Antigonus Doson to shortly before the embassy of Nicophanes and Cercidas of Megalopolis in 225-6BC.

were adept at gaining financial contributions from other states.<sup>29</sup> However, a small community like Cytenion may have found it difficult to both finance and organise such a large project.

If one looks at the inscription for evidence that Aetolian foreign policy was influenced by claims of pan-Dorian brotherhood, reference is made to Ptolemy's descent from Hercules, the same descent that the inhabitants of Cytenion and Xanthos share.<sup>30</sup> The embassy was sent with the approval of the Aetolian league's assembly which stated that any aid forthcoming from Xanthos would be acceptable not only to the inhabitants of Cytenion, but also to the Aetolians, Ptolemy and all other Dorians.<sup>31</sup> So, although a small community in need of financial assistance made the appeal, it was done in a context where all the states involved publicly acknowledged a belief in a common origin.<sup>32</sup>

The problem lies in how much credence Greeks placed in the mythical kinship links that they acknowledged between each other. Curty argues that kinship relationships were closely defined and can be divided into three specific types, *philia*, *oikeiotes* and *syngeneia*, suggesting that the language employed in

---

<sup>29</sup> Bousquet (1988) p. 44-5.

<sup>30</sup> Walbank (1989) p. 184 and Hornblower (1996) p. 79.

<sup>31</sup> See Lines 73-4 and 79-88.

<sup>32</sup> The case of the Aetolian *polis* of Arisinoe demonstrates how close the relationship was, this settlement voluntarily changed its name from Konope to one derived from a member of the Ptolemaic monarchy. Cohen (1995) p.109.



them was precise and rarely interchangeable.<sup>33</sup> Hornblower doubts that kinship can be defined this closely and points out that a certain amount of caution has to be exercised, since much of the information relating to mythical kinship in Thucydides, in particular the relationship between Macedonia and Argos, comes from Herodotus.<sup>34</sup> However, Hornblower accepts that Thucydides was aware of the significance of these links. The problem lies in the question of whether or not claims of mythical kinship were sometimes conveniently created to explain existing political alliances.<sup>35</sup> For example, reference is made to the kinship links between Aetolia and Axos on Crete in the alliance formed between the two, where in reality strategic considerations were probably responsible.<sup>36</sup>

Turning towards the relationship between Elis and Aetolia, one must firstly consider the mythological record. Starting with Pausanias, the legends he records are confined to the coastal plain of Aetolia. According to Pausanias, writing in the second century AD, the father of the Aetolian *ethnos*, Aetolus, was born in Elis.<sup>37</sup> Aetolus was the son of Endymion and the nymph Neis, and was forced to give up his claim to the throne of Elis after he

---

<sup>33</sup> Curty (1995) pp. 215-231.

<sup>34</sup> Hornblower (1996) p.70.

<sup>35</sup> Erskine (2001) pp.163-8.

<sup>36</sup> Curty (1995) numbers 14 and 35.

<sup>37</sup> Paus.5.1.8.



killed Apis.<sup>38</sup> He moved to Aetolia, which at the time was occupied by the Curetes, whom he eventually overcame in the episode recorded in the sequence in the Iliad dealing with Meleager's boar hunt.<sup>39</sup> According to Strabo, the Curetes moved to Acarnania where they settled.<sup>40</sup> Aetolus' sons, Calydon and Pleuron, came to dominate the area and the two major communities on the Aetolian coastal plain were named after them. It was from Aetolus' sons that famous Aetolian heroes such as Tydeus of Calydon were descended.

Nor was this mythical movement all one-sided. Pausanias' account reflects a back and forth migration between Aetolia and Elis. One of the descendants of Aetolus, Oxylus, returned to Elis, where he was made king.<sup>41</sup> Pausanias also states that the Eleans had crossed over from Calydon, suggesting that the Aetolians claimed that they originally came from Elis, and the Eleans that they had originated in Aetolia.<sup>42</sup>

How important was this claimed mythical kinship to the Eleans and the Aetolians during the Hellenistic period, especially since the majority of the evidence for its existence is derived from such a late source? Although the relationship was undoubtedly close, Aetolians becoming Elean *strategoi* during

---

<sup>38</sup> Paus.5.1.8.

<sup>39</sup> Homer Il .9.509ff.

<sup>40</sup> Strabo 10.3.4. See Bommeljé (1988) p.300.

<sup>41</sup> Paus 5.3.6. Aristotle *Polit.*6.2.5.

<sup>42</sup> Paus. 5.1.3.

the Social War, there may be reasons for the alliance other than a belief in a common origin. Elis had opposed the formation of the Arcadian league, mostly because it laid claim to territory that fell under Arcadian control during the fourth century.<sup>43</sup> Thus, when the Achaean league began to expand a century later under Aratus' leadership and incorporated most of Arcadia, the co-operation between the Aetolian league and Elis was possibly based on the political realities of the Hellenistic period.

Perhaps one must first consider the limited evidence for the classical period; in particular an episode recorded in Diodorus where the Aetolians sent a force of a thousand men to assist the Eleans in 402BC. In discussing the preparations made in Elis to withstand the Spartan onslaught, Diodorus states that:

*A short time before this they had got from the Aetolians a thousand élite troops to help them.*<sup>44</sup>

Although not a contemporary source, Diodorus draws attention to the significant contribution made by the Aetolians to assist Elis when it faced almost total destruction at the hands of Sparta. If one looks at contemporary evidence for claims of a kinship relationship between the two, there is a reference in Pindar to a belief in Elis that the founders of the Olympic games originated in Aetolia.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Larsen (1968) pp. 189-92.

<sup>44</sup> Diodorus 14.17.9. See Unz (1986) p.33, who doubts they were mercenaries.

<sup>45</sup> Pindar. OL. 3.12.



Thus, although the Aetolians may from time to time have adapted their mythology to suit political realities, the fact remains that in the fifth century the Aetolians sent a sizeable force across the Gulf of Corinth to assist Elis when Sparta threatened it. Furthermore, the mythical kinship relationship between the two was acknowledged in the fifth century. Does Polybius' stated belief that such links were not a worthy subject for *pragmatikê historia* account for his failure to acknowledge such claims as a reason for the alliance between the two? Elis had resisted earlier attempts by the Arcadians to form a league. As an Arcadian, and a member of a vastly expanded Achaean league, Polybius had a different perspective on events in the Peloponnese from the Aetolians and Eleans. For example, Cynaetha, on the Arcadian/Elean border was surrendered by some of its citizens to the Aetolians in 220BC before the outbreak of the Social War. Although Polybius mentions internal strife in this *polis* and digresses at great length about the uses of music in education, Cynaetha had earlier favoured an alliance with Elis and had been brought within the Achaean league against its will by Aratus.<sup>46</sup> Thus, was this a betrayal by social revolutionaries from the lower classes who hoped for the re-distribution of land? Or rather does it indicate that Elis used the kinship bond it had with the Aetolians to appeal for assistance when it felt its

---

<sup>46</sup> Walbank (1936) pp.64-71.



position endangered and that a faction in Cynaetha viewed the Aetolians as the kinsmen of their allies in Elis?

### Aetolian Piracy and the Peloponnese? *Proxenia* and *Asyilia* Decrees.

Of the epigraphic remains found at Thermon, the political centre of the Aetolian league during the Hellenistic period, the number of *proxenia* and *isopoliteia* decrees are the most abundant, since the Aetolian league negotiated *proxenia* relationships with citizens of nearly all the major islands and seaboard states.<sup>47</sup> It is not easy to assess what the granting of these honours means for our understanding of the Aetolian league's relations with other states. The intention of this section will be to place Aetolian *proxenia* relationships in their proper context.

According to Davies, *proxenia* as a concept was intended to regulate and assist the flow of commercial activity between states. *Proxenia* was a necessary part of trade, since the recipient would be expected to assist in disputes on behalf of the state that had awarded him this honour.<sup>48</sup> Returning to Polybius' contention that the Aetolians were a nation of pirates and brigands, we are left with the question of whether or not this was true. Polybius describes them as such only in regard to their actions in the Peloponnese before the outbreak of the Social War.

---

<sup>47</sup> Benecke (1934) p.31.

<sup>48</sup> CAH vol. 7 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) p.288.

If one accepts that piracy was an essential part of the Aetolian economy there is the question of how they could have carried it out since the Aetolian coastline is a vast lagoon, hindering the development of maritime activities.<sup>49</sup> The only evidence for Aetolian piracy is one interpretation of *asylia* decrees, in which one state promised another protection from acts such as piracy. The conclusion by the Aetolian league of *asylia* agreements with maritime states such as Chios, Delos and Mytilene suggests that these states had gained immunity from Aetolian piracy, through what Davies describes as a system of state sponsored blackmail.<sup>50</sup> However, *asylia* has also been linked with diplomacy, both in Aetolia and elsewhere.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, we are left with the problem of whether the Aetolians concluded *proxenia* agreements in order to gain assistance in their piratical activities or, rather, to cement their commercial and political relations with other states. It is interesting to see how one recipient of Aetolian *proxenia* acted during a period of crisis. According to Livy, Euthymidas was exiled from Chalcis because he tried to ally it with the Aetolian league in 192BC in a co-ordinated attempt by the Aetolians to seize control over key Greek states before the outbreak of war with Rome.<sup>52</sup> It appears certain that the same individual became an Aetolian *proxenos* in

---

<sup>49</sup> Grainger (1999) p.24

<sup>50</sup> CAH. VII. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. ) pp. 285-90.

<sup>51</sup> Rigsby (1996) p. 17.

<sup>52</sup> Livy.35.37.1-38.4.

208BC.<sup>53</sup> So although grants of *proxenia* may have originated on a commercial basis, the ties created probably resulted in the recipient favouring the Aetolian league politically. Thus, if the grants of *proxenia* by the Aetolian league secured the support of individuals in communities who expounded a pro-Aetolian view, the extensive network of *proxenia* relations that the Aetolian league formed begins to take on a new light.

If one looks at the Peloponnese, the Aetolians concluded a *proxenia* alliance with inhabitants of every major state there during the Hellenistic period, including Polybius' native Megalopolis. Whatever their motives may have been, we still have to understand the relationship between the image derived from Polybius' depiction of Aetolian actions and the evidence that many, presumably influential, citizens in the Peloponnese were Aetolian *proxenoi*.

Turning firstly towards Dyme, the Aetolian league concluded a number of *proxenia* relationships with inhabitants of this *polis*.<sup>54</sup> The decrees themselves remain fairly formulaic, with just the names of the officials involved and the recipient mentioned.<sup>55</sup> A similar pattern is followed in the surrounding *poleis* that were the founding members of the Achaean league; the Aetolian league concluded *proxenia* relationships with four of

---

<sup>53</sup> IG.IX.1(2) 1.31 Line 67.

<sup>54</sup> Polyb.2.41.1-8.

<sup>55</sup> IG.IX.1(2) 1.13 Lines 35-6; IG IX.1(2) 1.34. line 22.



the principal *poleis* that formed the original Achaean league, including Aegium, which was its capital until 188BC. If one accepts the argument that the Aetolians used *proxenia* to assist their piratical activities, it is possible that they were using these awards to further their position in coastal areas that they may have wished to prey on. However, links between *poleis* on either side of the Gulf of Corinth had been very strong since the archaic period. Craftsmen from Sicyon and Corinth assisted in the development of the Aetolians' religious centre at Thermon, so it seems only natural that there should have been *proxenia* relations between these communities. This situation continues along the northern coast of the Peloponnese; inhabitants of Sicyon, another *polis* that had long-standing links with the Aetolian league, were Aetolian *proxenoi*.<sup>56</sup>

Apart from the northern shore of the Peloponnese, the Aetolian league seems to have concentrated *proxenia* agreements with individuals in areas of the Peloponnese that were of strategic importance to them, such as Messene, Phigaleia, Sparta, Telphusa, Thurioi and Argos.<sup>57</sup> The final *polis* in the Peloponnese

---

<sup>56</sup> For Sicyon see IG. IX.1 (2) 1.17 lines 14, 49, 80 and 85.

<sup>57</sup> Messene and Phigaleia IG. IX.1(2) 1.12H Line 47, IG. IX. 1 (2) 1.17. lines 7 and 62; IG. IX. I(2) .1.31 lines 23 and 34-5; IG. IX.1(2) 1.13. line 19.

Sparta IG. IX.1(2) 1.17 line 78; IG. IX.1(2) 1.29 line 11.

Telphusa, Thurioi and Argos, see IG. IX.1(2) 1.31 line 89; IG. IX.1(2) 1.31 line 18 and IG. IX.1(2) 1.25 line 9.

whose inhabitants the Aetolians established *proxenia* relations with was Megalopolis.<sup>58</sup>

It must be asked whether these relationships should be seen simply in a commercial context. For example, *proxenia* relationships existed between the Aetolian league and individuals in Ambrakia, Phaloria and Larisa, all communities bordering on Macedonia, a traditional rival of the Aetolian league, suggesting a strategic basis. In Italy, the Aetolian league concluded *proxenia* relationships with individuals in most of the important Greek commercial ports.<sup>59</sup> It is not inconceivable that these relationships might have originated for commercial reasons, but once formed, created a situation where political support ensued when the Aetolian league faced a crisis, as the case of Euthymidas in 192BC suggests.

As with the claimed mythical kinship link that existed between Elis and the Aetolian league, Polybius' depiction of the relationship that the Aetolian league had with the Peloponnese is very different from what the evidence provided by *proxenia* decrees suggests. The proliferation of links between the Aetolian league and important and influential citizens in many *poleis* in the Peloponnese suggests that Aetolian league had long established commercial and strategic interests there.

---

<sup>58</sup> IG.IX.1(2) 1.13 lines 8 and 11; IG.IX.I(2) 1.17 lines 7 and 62 and IG.IX. I.(2) 1.31 line 78.

<sup>59</sup> Naples IG.IX .1 (2) 1.33

Tarentum IG. IX I(2) 1.24 lines 12, 31 and 83

Syracuse IG.IX.1 (2) 1.17. Line 67.

## Polybius, the Cleomenic War and the socio-economic question in Sparta.

Apart from the Aetolian league, the other state that challenged the Achaean league for control over the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period, prior to Roman involvement, was Sparta and as with the Aetolians, Hellenistic Spartan kings receive negative treatment in Polybius' histories. However, we are not solely dependent on Polybius as a source for Sparta during this period since Plutarch wrote lives of Agis and Cleomenes in parallel with the Gracchi, apparently using Polybius' contemporary Phylarchus as his primary source. This creates an interesting situation, since the existence of an alternative source has drawn historians' attention to Hellenistic Sparta. Of particular interest are the reforms of Agis and Cleomenes, especially their socio-economic aspects, such as the re-distribution of land, the enlargement of the citizen body and the abolition of debts. Sparta during the Hellenistic period has been depicted by historians as suffering from a socio-economic crisis, with the gap between rich and poor becoming ever wider, accounting for Cleomenes' popularity.

Should we accept Plutarch's account of the situation in Sparta and his stress on the influence that Stoic philosophy played in influencing reforms there? Polybius fails to make any mention of Cleomenes' social reforms as a justification for the



Achaean league's decision to invite the Macedonians to re-enter the Peloponnese. Polybius' only mention of Cleomenes carrying out reforms comes in an indirect reference to Cheilon, a later Spartan king, who, Polybius stated, believed that:

*If he followed in Cleomenes' footsteps by holding out to the multitude the hope of allotments and redistribution of the lands, he would soon have the masses behind him.*<sup>60</sup>

Polybius extensively discusses the military campaigns of Cleomenes in the part of his histories that survive intact, but this is his only reference to any of Cleomenes' reforms and no indication is given as to what stage in his career it came. In discussing change in Sparta, Polybius merely states that Cleomenes overthrew the ancient constitution and turned himself from a king into a tyrant without elaborating on what actually happened. As Piper notes, Cleomenes made no attempt to extend his reforms outside Sparta; they were limited to the citizen body.<sup>61</sup>

Since Polybius does not describe the Spartan kings of the late third century BC as social revolutionaries, it might be more profitable to consider Plutarch who does. Writing in the second century AD, Plutarch's intention was to compare the lives of two Spartan kings, Agis and Cleomenes, with the Gracchi, to draw parallels from the lives of famous figures in both Greek and

---

<sup>60</sup> Polyb.4.81.2. and Polyb.4.81.13.

<sup>61</sup> Piper (1986) pp.65-66.

Roman history which would give moral instruction to his readers. Given that comparisons between Rome and Sparta were long established, Plutarch's decision to choose two Spartan kings was natural.<sup>62</sup>

The extent to which Plutarch's writings on the Gracchi influence his thoughts and presentation of events in Greece in the third century has only recently been considered.<sup>63</sup> It is generally accepted that Plutarch draws much of his information about Cleomenes from Phylarchus, but since the latter does not survive we know little about his writings apart from the fact that he was pro-Spartan and that Polybius criticised his work as sensational. Phylarchus' philosophical attitude, whether he was a Stoic or a Cynic, is unknown. We have little knowledge of the vocabulary that he used and it is evident that Plutarch did not copy out his source, but re-organised it and changed the vocabulary. Although the life of Cleomenes contains Stoic epithets, they originate with Plutarch.<sup>64</sup> Plutarch presents Cleomenes' actions as those of a social reformer influenced by Stoic philosophy; it is by no means evident that Phylarchus did. The fear that the Peloponnese would fall into the hands of a reformer who favoured the masses is taken for granted by some historians. It is based on evidence provided by Plutarch, a source

---

<sup>62</sup> See Cicero *De Off* 2.80 for an earlier example.

<sup>63</sup> Erskine (1990) p. 127-8 draws particular attention to Agis.

<sup>64</sup> See Erskine (1990) p. 132.



whose wider picture of Spartan society has recently come in for re-appraisal.

If one looks at Cleomenes' reforms as detailed by Plutarch, for the first five years of his reign Cleomenes failed to take any action, starting only after Aratus had captured the *polis* of Mantinea. When Cleomenes tried to retaliate, according to Plutarch, he was forced to bribe the *ephors* for permission.<sup>65</sup> When Cleomenes tried to restore the diarchy by recalling Archidamus, Agis' brother, the *ephors* had Archidamus murdered before his arrival.<sup>66</sup> After this, according to Plutarch, Cleomenes began to plot with his mother Cratesicleia and other prominent citizens and eventually murdered the *ephors* and exiled eighty leading Spartan citizens.<sup>67</sup> When this had been achieved, Cleomenes introduced a number of reforms; the *ephorate* was abolished, the *agoge*, the traditional training of boys was revived, as were the common messes for men. With regard to land, Cleomenes ordered that it should be divided into four thousand equally sized plots, that suitable foreigners should be made citizens, and all debts should be abolished.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Plut.*Cleom.*6.1.

<sup>66</sup>Plut. *Cleom.* 5.2-3. Polyb.5.37.1-6. suggests that Cleomenes, not the *ephors*, was responsible for this murder.

<sup>67</sup>Plutarch emphasises the Stoic element in Cleomenes' education by Sphaerus of Borysthenes and his marriage to Agis' widow. Plut *Cleom* 1.1-2, 2.2. Walbank (1984) p. 456 doubts this element in the narrative.

<sup>68</sup> Plut.*Cleom.*10.6. Shimron (1972) pp.151-2.



It is interesting to contrast these reforms with those carried out in 146BC, when the Achaean league was facing war with Rome.<sup>69</sup> According to Fuks, at least three areas of possible social revolutionary activity can be seen in the actions undertaken by the leadership of the Achaean league that year: the abolition of debts, the freeing of slaves and the use of the wealth of the elite. On closer examination these reforms seem to be an attempt by the Achaean leadership to gain popular support in its struggle against Rome.<sup>70</sup> If one remembers that Plutarch's intention was to write a parallel life of the Gracchi, his presentation of Cleomenes' actions as ones influenced by Stoic philosophy may be a distortion of what actually happened. Phylarchus presented events from a Spartan point of view; his transmission through Plutarch leads to an assumption that there were social problems in Sparta that are not evident in Polybius' account of this conflict. Cleomenes' reforms may have been an attempt to gain popular support at a time when Sparta faced severe difficulties. For example, after Macedonian troops had entered the Peloponnese, in an attempt to gain both money and troops, Cleomenes is said to have sold six-thousand *helots* their freedom in return for five minas a head.<sup>71</sup> Cleomenes was willing to carry out this reform to gain a short-term advantage at the end of the war. Were his

---

<sup>69</sup> Shimron (1972) p. 133-4 comments on the irony in the reversal of roles, since at this time the Achaeans are the radicals and the Spartans the conservatives.

<sup>70</sup> Fuks (1970) pp.79-86.

<sup>71</sup> Plut. *Cleom.* 23.1.

earlier reforms influenced by Stoicism, or rather were they measures designed to increase Spartan military effectiveness?<sup>72</sup>

It cannot be doubted that Cleomenes did introduce changes in Spartan society. Polybius' reference to a later Spartan king following in his footsteps by holding out to the multitude the hope of re-distributing land would seem to indicate that at some stage of his reign Cleomenes proposed this reform. What is unclear is the impetus behind these reforms and why Polybius did not make any direct reference to this aspect of Cleomenes' reign. Erskine suggests that Polybius may have downplayed Cleomenes' reforms because he did not wish to undermine the fragile socio-economic basis of the Achaean league.<sup>73</sup> He draws attention to Polybius' reference to events at Cynaetha, which surrendered itself to an Aetolian raiding force just before the outbreak of the Social War, where sometime between 241 and 229BC there had been calls for the re-distribution of land.<sup>74</sup> In discussing events at Cynaetha, Polybius makes mention of a group of restored exiles whom allowed the Aetolian raiders into this *polis*, and the calls for land re-distribution that heralded their exile.

Should events at this *polis* be seen solely as evidence of socio-economic problems in the Peloponnese? Cynaetha's

---

<sup>72</sup> For the earlier use of slaves in the Spartan army see Hunt (1998) pp.171-5.

<sup>73</sup> Erskine (1990) p.127.

<sup>74</sup> Polyb.4.17.4-5. Walbank (1957) p.464 suggests a date nearer to 227BC.



location in northern Arcadia suggests that it favoured allying with Elis, since it had broken away from the Arcadian league in favour of an alliance with Elis in 244BC.<sup>75</sup> Aratus had forced Cynaetha into the Achaean league by a surprise attack similar to his more famous assault on Corinth and the exiles might have been created in the aftermath of this episode. In the context of the claimed mythical kinship link between Elis and the Aetolians, what has in the past been seen as evidence of class conflict in the Peloponnese, may actually have been an attempt by some inhabitants of Cynaetha to end its membership of the Achaean league in favour of an alliance with the Eleans and their Aetolian kinsmen.

### The Outbreak of the Cleomenic War and the Achaean alliance with Macedonia.

Although the Cleomenic War falls outside the period that Polybius states will be covered by his histories, he informs his readers that he will give a long digression on it because:

*I thought that it would be of service, or rather that the original plan of this work made it necessary for me to make clearly known to everybody the state of affairs in Macedonia and Greece.*<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Polyb.4.77.9-10

<sup>76</sup> Polyb.2.71.2.



Why did Polybius feel it necessary to have such a long digression on events in the Peloponnese, especially when, presumably, Aratus had covered these events in his *Memoirs*? Was Polybius' intention merely to carry on from where Aratus finished his work, or was it to provide another view on the affairs of the Achaean league? There is the problem that although we know that Aratus wrote *Memoirs*, which Plutarch used, they do not survive, except in fragments. After the battle of Sellasia, for the latter part of Aratus' career, Plutarch used Polybius as his source, suggesting that he began his histories from the point where Aratus had stopped.<sup>77</sup> Given that Aratus had devoted most of his life to ridding the Peloponnese of Macedonian influence, he may have considered that Antigonus Doson re-gaining control over this region was a suitable point to finish.

However, despite the assumption that Polybius started his histories from the point where Aratus stopped, there are differences in the sources as to who was responsible for the outbreak of the Cleomenic War. Furthermore, in his account of the eventual decision to invite the Macedonians to re-enter the Peloponnese, Polybius' account is vague as to the reasons behind this decision and who was actually responsible for taking it. Polybius places the blame for the outbreak of the war on the treacherous nature of the Aetolians, Macedonians and

---

<sup>77</sup> Porter (1939) p.XIX

Spartans. After discussing the early history and development of the Achaean league, Polybius states that:

*The Achaeans, being naturally thus materially increased in extent and power, the Aetolians, owing to that unprincipled passion for aggrandisement which is natural to them, either out of envy, or rather in the hope of partitioning the poleis...joined hands with Antigonus and Cleomenes.*<sup>78</sup>

As Walbank points out, this sequence of events is improbable. He suggests that Polybius was merely reproducing Aratus' tendentious account of events.<sup>79</sup> Walbank argues that it is doubtful whether it was with the acquiescence of the Aetolian league that Cleomenes seized a number of *poleis* in Arcadia, which were members of the Achaean league.<sup>80</sup>

Plutarch's account of the outbreak of the war is different. Although Polybius presents the Spartans acting aggressively, Plutarch in his life of Cleomenes states that:

*Aratus, the most powerful man amongst the Achaeans, was from the start desirous of bringing the Peloponnesians into one confederation... nearly all of them adopted his views, but the Spartans, Eleans and the Arcadians who sided with*

---

<sup>78</sup> Polyb.2.45.1.

<sup>79</sup> Walbank (1957) p. 239. Followed by Urban (1972) p.131.

<sup>80</sup> Walbank (1957) p.243 suggests that the Aetolian league's interests in the Peloponnese were focused elsewhere. Cleomenes at the same time fortified the temple of Athena at Belinatis inside Megalopolitan territory: Plut. *Cleom.*4.4.

*the Spartans refused. Therefore, as soon as Leonidas was dead, Aratus began to harass the Arcadians, and ravaged the territories of those especially who were adjacent to the Achaeans...his object was to put the Spartans to the test.*<sup>81</sup>

Aratus does not seem to have been the sole Achaean leader who favoured an aggressive policy towards Sparta. In 234BC when Lydiades, the former tyrant who brought Megalopolis within the Achaean league was elected Achaean *strategos*, his first action was to attack Sparta.<sup>82</sup> Although Polybius places the blame for the outbreak of war on others, Plutarch's account suggests that the Spartans were responding to provocation by Aratus and the Achaean league.

Cleomenes' seizure of these Arcadian *poleis* brought about a declaration of war by the Achaean league and later that year Aratus captured Caphyae.<sup>83</sup> Cleomenes responded by advancing into Arcadia, seizing Methydrium, which belonged to Megalopolis.<sup>84</sup> When in response the Achaean league's *strategos* Aristomachus led an army consisting of twenty thousand infantry and a thousand cavalry against Cleomenes' force of five thousand men, Aratus forced the Achaeans to

---

<sup>81</sup> Plut.*Cleom.*3.4-5.

<sup>82</sup> Plut.*Arat.*30.3.

<sup>83</sup> Polyb.2.46.2. and Plut. *Cleom.* .4.4.

<sup>84</sup> Polyb.2.46.5. Walbank (1957) p.243.



retreat after the two armies had met at Pallantium, despite the massive superiority in numbers they enjoyed.<sup>85</sup>

Who was responsible for the aggressive policy towards Sparta that the Achaean league undertook? Gruen has noted the influence that Megalopolitans had in defining the Achaean league's policy towards Sparta after it became a member in 235BC.<sup>86</sup> The Achaean league was simultaneously attacking Elis, suggesting an Arcadian dominated policy.<sup>87</sup> If Megalopolitans guided this policy, we have to ask how acceptable it was to other members of the Achaean league. When Cleomenes captured Leuctra shortly afterwards, Aratus refused to engage him in open battle. His *hipparch*, Lydiades of Megalopolis, led the cavalry against Cleomenes' army and was killed.<sup>88</sup> Aratus was censured for his failure to give battle and after Lydiades' death, the Achaean army proceeded to Aegium where they voted not to finance any further campaigns, a move that made Aratus resign his office as *strategos*. According to Plutarch, the delegates resolved that:

---

<sup>85</sup> Plut. *Cleom.* 4.4-5. Walbank (1984) p. 457 suggests that his motive was to retain the subsidy from Egypt that the Achaean league received.

<sup>86</sup> See Gruen (1972) p. 609-25, Cartledge (1989) p.41 and Green (1990) p.292. Walbank (1933) p.71 commenting on the earlier difficulties surrounding the entry of Argos into the Achaean league, suggests that the delay was caused by Aratus' desire not to allow Lydiades to negotiate the conditions of entry, in case it would increase the anti-Macedonian bloc that existed within the Achaean league.

<sup>87</sup> Plut. *Arat.* 36.1-2; Plut. *Cleom.* 5.1.

<sup>88</sup> Plut. *Arat.* 36.1. *Cleom.* 6.4.

*If Aratus wanted to wage war, he must provide the means himself.*<sup>89</sup>

It appears that an expanded Achaean league undertook aggressive actions against Sparta at the behest of Megalopolis. Should Cleomenes' reforms, which took place around this time, be seen as evidence of social problems in Sparta? Plutarch states that Cleomenes wished to regenerate Spartan society, in particular its citizen body, so that:

*The strongest of them might be made Spartan citizens and help to preserve the state by their arms. "In this way" he said, "we shall cease to behold Sparta the booty of Aetolians and Illyrians through lack of men to defend her".*<sup>90</sup>

It appears that Cleomenes was reacting against an aggressive policy that the Achaean league had instituted, after its expansion into Arcadia had added a new dimension to an ongoing struggle for control over the Peloponnese. Gruen has drawn attention to the role that Megalopolitans, especially Lydiades, played in the conduct of this conflict; Urban has pointed out how Megalopolis' desire to re-acquire Triphylia from Elis may have been a possible factor in provoking the conflict.<sup>91</sup> Was this policy acceptable to the elite in *poleis* like Dyme, Sicyon and Corinth, who would have had a different

---

<sup>89</sup>Walbank (1984) p.458 argues that Lydiades' supporters were to blame for Aratus' resignation. Plut.*Arat.*38.1.

<sup>90</sup>Plut. *Cleom.*10.6.

<sup>91</sup>Urban (1972) p. 115-6.

regional interest from their Arcadian counterparts within the Achaean league? Although both Plutarch and Polybius present Aratus as the dominant figure in the Achaean league, it would appear that Megalopolitan interests dominated the policy followed by the Achaean league after 235BC. So were later events credited to Aratus by Polybius his sole responsibility, or rather the result of Megalopolitan pressure?

Polybius, the embassy of Nicophanes and Cercidas and the Achaean league's appeal to Antigonus.

The most obvious point at which Arcadian influence on the policies of the Achaean league can be seen is the embassy sent to Macedonia to sound out Antigonus Doson about intervening in support of the Achaean league against Sparta. Polybius claims that Aratus secretly sent a mission led by Nicophanes and Cercidas of Megalopolis to Macedonia, because he could see how Megalopolis was suffering in the face of Spartan attacks.<sup>92</sup> Polybius continues to claim that Aratus did not make his decision to send this mission public knowledge and that:

*Consequently Aratus was compelled in public both to do and say many things contrary to his real intention.*<sup>93</sup>

And as a result:

---

<sup>92</sup> Polyb.2.48.1-7. That Aratus was solely responsible for the dispatch of this mission is generally accepted. See for example Walbank (1984) pp.461-462.

<sup>93</sup> Polyb.2.47.10.



*For this reason there are some similar matters that Aratus does not even refer to in his Memoirs.*<sup>94</sup>

However, while unlike Plutarch, we do not have Aratus' Memoirs to consult, he tells us that when the decision was later taken to ask for assistance from Macedonia:

*Aratus says everything that he can in explaining the necessity that was upon him. Polybius however says that for a long time, and before the need arose, Aratus mistrusted the daring nature of Cleomenes and made secret approaches to Antigonus, besides putting the Megalopolitans forward to beg the Achaeans to call in Antigonus.*<sup>95</sup>

One might question whether Aratus, who had devoted much of his life to ridding the Peloponnese of the Macedonian presence would have initiated secret talks with Antigonus. Orsi has suggested that the embassy was sent with the intention of securing an *epimachia*, or a defensive alliance, and unofficially to sound out Antigonus on the possibility of an eventual Achaean alliance with Macedonia.<sup>96</sup> She suggests that Aratus later disowned it in his Memoirs because his earlier decision to seek an *epimachia* might have been a hindrance to a full alliance at a later stage.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Polyb.2.47.11. Walbank (1957) p. 247 suggests that Polybius got this story from his own circles in Megalopolis.

<sup>95</sup> Plut.*Arat.*38.7.

<sup>96</sup> Orsi (1991) pp. 78-79.

<sup>97</sup> Orsi (1991) p. 90-93.

Should we accept Polybius' assertion that Aratus, who had made his reputation as an anti-Macedonian leader, was secretly responsible for sending two Megalopolitans on a mission to Macedonia, because, according to Polybius, he could see how Megalopolis was suffering from Cleomenes' assaults? Before Megalopolis joined the Achaean league in 235BC it had been one of Macedonia's closest allies in the Peloponnese.<sup>98</sup> Lydiades' decision to bring it within the Achaean league had severed the ties between the two. Walbank suggested that his death would make an approach by Megalopolitans to Antigonus easier since he could be blamed for any sense of betrayal that might exist.<sup>99</sup> Polybius' account of the Cleomenic War comes after his account of the development of the Achaean league, with its stress on unity and it may be that Polybius was trying to defend Megalopolitans against accusations that they had betrayed the Achaean league to suit their own interests. In stating that Aratus was secretly responsible for this mission, but that for reasons that are not specified, was unable to acknowledge his role in his *Memoirs*, Polybius' intention may have been to explain this embassy to his contemporaries; at times he even appears to be defensive.

---

<sup>98</sup> Walbank (1957) p.247 points to Demosthenes' attack on Cercidas' ancestral namesake for being pro-Macedonian.

<sup>99</sup> Walbank (1984) p. 461.

Regarding the ambassadors, Polybius claims that both were family friends of Aratus, hence his choice of them to approach Macedonia. According to Polybius, although the ambassadors were Megalopolitan and Aratus had sent the embassy because of Cleomenes' attacks on Megalopolis:

*They said no more than they needed about their own polis, dealing with this matter briefly and hastily, but dwelt at length on the general situation, in the manner that Aratus had told them to.*<sup>100</sup>

The threat that both ambassadors were supposed to have related to Antigonus was that if Sparta and the Aetolian league were to co-operate, or if Sparta came to dominate the Peloponnese, Macedonia would find itself endangered. Although Walbank assumes that Polybius is repeating Aratus' account of the embassy, he admits that a Spartan dominated Peloponnese was no threat to Macedonia. Nor does Walbank accept that the possibility of an alliance between Sparta and the Aetolian league was anything more than a slight danger to Antigonus' interests.<sup>101</sup> The alliance that the ambassadors predicted did in fact emerge during the Social War and Polybius might have been trying to persuade his readers that the embassy was an attempt by Aratus to gain assistance before this happened.

---

<sup>100</sup> Polyb.2.50.1.

<sup>101</sup> Walbank (1957) p. 248. For the threat see Polyb.2.49.1.



Thus we are left with the problem of whether Polybius' account of this embassy reflects his desire to portray the unity of the Achaean league so that *anacyclosis*' influence on its system of government could be contrasted with Rome.<sup>102</sup> In the period in which he was writing Megalopolis had been a member of the Achaean league for over a century: at the time that the embassy was sent this membership had existed for only a few years. So it should be asked whether responsibility for this move was solely Aratus', or rather, as in the case of the aggressive policy undertaken by the Achaean league towards Sparta and Elis, the result of Megalopolitan influence over the Achaean league's policy.

Polybius' defensiveness about this mission can be seen in his account of the Achaean assembly that discussed it. He states that the ambassadors returned with a letter that stated that the Macedonians would assist them, but only if and when they received permission from the rest of the Achaeans. When this was debated at the Achaean assembly, we are informed by Polybius that:

*The Megalopolitans appeared before the council of the league and showed them the king's letter, assured them of his friendly sentiments, and at the same time begged the*

---

<sup>102</sup> Eckstein (1995) p. 198-201 points to the similarities and defensive tone both in this speech and Polybius' account of this mission with his account of events in 198BC, when the Achaean league under the leadership of Aristaenus of Megalopolis allied with Rome. However, Aristaenus' speech in 198BC is actually in Livy, not Polybius

*Achaean to ask for his intervention at once. When Aratus saw that this was the inclination of the Achaeans he rose, and after expressing his gratification at the king's readiness to assist them.... he addressed them, begging them if possible to attempt to save their poleis and ethnos by their own efforts, that being the most honourable and advantageous action. But should adverse fortune prevent this, then, but only when they had no hope in their own efforts, he advised them to appeal to their friends for aid.* <sup>103</sup>

Polybius' account implies that for Aratus Macedonian intervention was the last resort.<sup>104</sup> If Aratus was responsible for opening discussions with Macedonia, it was a remarkable change from his long-established policy. He had been in receipt of a subsidy from Ptolemy since he had taken control over Sicyon because of his anti-Macedonian actions.<sup>105</sup> By allowing the return of Antigonus Doson to the Peloponnese, the Achaean league became a Macedonian client until 198BC, a vassal of the state that Aratus had spent most of his adult life trying to remove from the Peloponnese.

If Megalopolitans had initiated contact with Macedonia, as is likely enough in view of the earlier relationship between the two, without Aratus' knowledge, it would naturally be

---

<sup>103</sup> Polyb.2.50.10-11.

<sup>104</sup> A point made by Eckstein (1995) p. 199.

<sup>105</sup> Plut.*Arat.*11.2. There is some ambiguity as to who is the king referred to since it could be either Antigonus or Ptolemy, but Porter (1937) p. XLI suggests Ptolemy.

something that Polybius would not emphasise since it would be contrary to his stress on the unity of the Achaean league. By claiming that Aratus had knowledge of this move and that it had been carried out at his behest, Polybius was able to present what may have solely been a Megalopolitan move as one that had enjoyed the support of the entire Achaean league.

Why would Megalopolis' inhabitants have acted in such an independent manner? Attention has been drawn to fear by members of the Achaean league's elite to Cleomenes possibly extending his reforms to the rest of the Peloponnese, and one of the ambassadors was known for his poetry that made reference to the masses. However, it is also evident that Cleomenes was at the point of defeating the Achaean league, and if he gained hegemony over the Achaean league, would dominate Megalopolis, a fate her elite would wish to avoid.

Around the same time, Ptolemy removed his subsidy from the Achaean league and transferred it to Sparta. His stated reason for doing this was that it would better serve his purposes by:

*Setting Cleomenes on to attack Antigonus, as he hoped to be able to control more effectively the Macedonian kings with the support of the Spartans than with the Achaeans.*<sup>106</sup>

It appears that Ptolemy decided to remove his subsidy because Aratus had lost control over the policy of the Achaean

---

<sup>106</sup> Polyb.2.51.2-3. Walbank (1957) pp. 247-8 dates this to the winter of 226/25BC.



league and switched his support to Cleomenes because he regarded Spartan domination of the Peloponnese as the best means for securing this region against Antigonid control.

Cleomenes again took the offensive, according to Plutarch, attacking Megalopolis, before turning towards the *poleis* that originally formed the Achaean league, defeating the Achaean army at Dyme.<sup>107</sup> A truce was arranged and Cleomenes was invited to discuss the question of hegemony over the Achaean league. The first conference was postponed because Cleomenes was ill and another was convened at Argos.<sup>108</sup> When Aratus insisted that Cleomenes should not bring his army to the conference, but only a bodyguard of three, the truce broke down.<sup>109</sup> Around the same time, according to Polybius, Aratus sent his son to the Macedonian court to negotiate.<sup>110</sup>

However, Polybius completely ignores the events surrounding the decision to call on Macedonia, and after giving his account of the embassy of Nicophanes and Cercidas, he merely states that the circumstances brought about by Cleomenes' onslaught resulted in a situation whereby the Achaeans were:

---

<sup>107</sup> Plut.*Cleom.*14.1-2. Walbank (1984) p.463.

<sup>108</sup> Plut.*Cleom.*14.2. Walbank (1984) p.463.

<sup>109</sup> Plut.*Cleom.*15.2.. Walbank (1984) p. 464 suggests that the age difference was an important consideration; Aratus was unwilling to hand control of the Achaean league over to somebody so much younger than himself, so he sabotaged the meeting.

<sup>110</sup> Polyb.2.51.4-5.

*Compelled by their position to appeal with one voice to Antigonus.*<sup>111</sup>

As Orsi notes, Polybius is deliberately vague about who exactly was responsible for this action, though she suggests that it was not the Achaean assembly, but rather a small group centred on Aratus.<sup>112</sup> Polybius' ambiguous account of these events, according to Orsi, was due to the legal position regarding the decision, since Aratus was exceeding his powers as *strategos*.<sup>113</sup>

If one examines Plutarch's account of the events leading up to the decision, he states that when the decision was taken to invite Macedonian forces into the Peloponnese at a special assembly at Sicyon such was the situation brought about by Cleomenes' actions, that:

*Only a few of the Achaeans came to meet with Aratus.*<sup>114</sup>

Aratus was elected as Achaean *strategos* with full powers but when Aratus' appeal to the Aetolian league and Athens for assistance was rejected, Cleomenes offered Aratus an annuity of twelve talents per year, provided that he was elected as hegemon.<sup>115</sup> Having no other alternative, according to Plutarch, Aratus went to the Achaean assembly at Aegium where the

---

<sup>111</sup> Polyb.2.51.4

<sup>112</sup> Orsi. (1991) p.93.

<sup>113</sup> Orsi (1991) p.97.

<sup>114</sup> Plut.*Arat*.41.1.

<sup>115</sup> Plut.*Arat*.41.2 for the appeal to the Aetolians and Athens.

decision was taken to invite Antigonus to the Peloponnese.<sup>116</sup> In light of Polybius' account of subsequent events and his allegations about their culpability in outbreak of the Cleomenic War, it is surprising that, according to Plutarch, Aratus first appealed to the Aetolian league for assistance and only agreed to call on Macedonia when it refused. This indicates that he regarded the Aetolian league as his first choice and only agreed to accept Macedonian assistance when they refused.

#### Reaction in the Achaean league to Macedonian intervention.

When Aratus did eventually accede to the pressures exerted on him to call on Antigonus Doson to intervene in the Peloponnese against Cleomenes, how acceptable was this to the various members of the Achaean league? The appeal to Macedonia was something Aratus only resorted to after the Aetolian league and Athens refused to support him. As Plutarch states about the subsequent reaction to excesses carried out by Macedonian troops in the Peloponnese:

*For these actions men blamed Aratus, not knowing that, since he had entrusted the reins to the king, and was dragged alongside him, he was no longer master of anything*

---

<sup>116</sup> Plut.*Arat.*45.1-3



*except his tongue, which it was dangerous for him to use with freedom.*<sup>117</sup>

Plutarch's intention was to portray the tragic nature of this decision, how a man who had spent most of his life fighting against the Macedonians was forced in the end to seek salvation from his former enemies. As with Plutarch's emphasis on the Stoic influence on Cleomenes' reforms, we are left with the problem that he did not regard his lives as histories; his intention was to explore the character of those involved. The decision to call in Macedonian troops is usually seen in the context of possible socio-economic problems in the Peloponnese. The opposition found in Sicyon and Corinth indicates that these revolts were actually in opposition to the Macedonian presence in the Peloponnese and both revolts came after the entry of Macedonian troops to the Peloponnese, not before. Although Walbank states that these revolts saved Aratus the embarrassment of explaining such a volte-face, this assumes; firstly that Aratus had sole responsibility for this decision; secondly, that the motivation in both *poleis* was socio-economic.<sup>118</sup> Though Plutarch suggests that these actions were undertaken because the common people wanted the redistribution of land and the abolition of debts, he also states that:

---

<sup>117</sup> Plut.*Arat.*45.2-3.

<sup>118</sup> Walbank (1993) p.198.

*The leading men in many cases were unhappy with Aratus and some of them were also angry with him for bringing the Macedonians into the Peloponnese.*<sup>119</sup>

At Corinth, the revolt came after the decision to invite the Macedonians had already been taken, suggesting that it was a response to the decision, not a cause of it. Plutarch states that the leading citizens allowed the Spartans to enter, indicating that although there is the possibility that the lower classes may have favoured Cleomenes, so did those with the most to lose had he favoured exporting reforms to the rest of the Peloponnese.

As Urban noted, both Corinth and Sicyon had traditional links with Sparta, and the decision by members of their elite to allow Spartan troops entry might reflect the long-standing association between these *poleis*.<sup>120</sup> It is evident from Polybius' account of the decision to invite Macedonian troops into the Peloponnese that he does not wish to indicate who exactly was responsible for taking the decision. But if a small group took it, there is the possibility, given its long-standing links with Macedonia, that the representatives of Megalopolis and other Arcadian communities in the Achaean league may have been responsible for forcing the decision to call on Antigonus at the extraordinary assembly of the Achaean league, and that

---

<sup>119</sup> Plut.*Cleom.*17.3.

<sup>120</sup> Urban (1972) p. 207.



Polybius' evasiveness was because of the role that they had played in the decision.

Antigonus' actions on entering the Peloponnese appear to have been aimed at securing the interests of the Argives and Arcadians within the Achaean league. He advanced on Argos, capturing it and restored the statues of former pro-Macedonian tyrants that Aratus had removed. Cleomenes was forced to retreat into the Peloponnese and was pursued by Antigonus, who bypassed the major Arcadian communities in order to expel the Spartan garrisons that surrounded Megalopolis.<sup>121</sup> Cleomenes was defeated at Sellasia and fled to Egypt where he died in a coup attempt.<sup>122</sup> In the resulting settlement the expanded Achaean league remained intact. The Macedonians regained control over the Acrocorinth, and Antigonus placed garrisons, which appear to have had a coercive role, in strategically important locations in the Peloponnese.<sup>123</sup> Taurion was left in the Peloponnese to oversee Macedonian interests, and the Achaean league became a Macedonian client.<sup>124</sup> More importantly, it also became a member of a Hellenic league, along with the Thessalians, Epirots, Acarnanians, Boeotians, Phocians and other

---

<sup>121</sup> The pro-Arcadian element in Antigonus' actions was noted by Larsen (1968) p.321.

<sup>122</sup> For Sellasia see Polyb.2.65-69. The death of Cleomenes see Plut.*Cleom.*37.7.

<sup>123</sup> Larsen (1968) pp.321-322.

<sup>124</sup> Polyb.4.6.4-6.



Macedonian clients. Aratus continued as an advisor to the future Philip V, but died believing that Philip poisoned him.<sup>125</sup>

Polybius portrays the decision to call on Macedonia as one forced upon a unified Achaean league at a time when it had no other option. In reality it resulted in the Achaean league exchanging possible dominance by Sparta for actual dominance by Macedonia; domination by a kingdom that Aratus had spent most of his life resisting, presumably with the assistance of many communities within the Achaean league. The unrest within the Achaean league that is taken as a sign that Cleomenes was regarded by the oppressed masses as a liberator came after the decision to call on the Macedonians had been taken, not before it. At Corinth, which was garrisoned by Macedonian troops until Aratus captured it and brought it into the Achaean league, the revolt appears to have been motivated by hostility to Macedonia, not because Cleomenes' rule would lead to a more equitable social order.

However, for Polybius it was indeed liberation from tyranny, though not the tyranny of rule by the masses. Rather it was a liberation from the possibility that Megalopolis would be forced to live under Spartan control. But was this necessarily in accordance with the wishes of all the other members of the Achaean league? The reaction to the decision at Sicyon and Corinth was revolts against the entry of Macedonian troops into

---

<sup>125</sup> Plut.*Arat.*52.1-2.

the Peloponnese. The fact that Aratus was a native of one, and owned property in another, indicates the extent of internal dissension within the Achaean league over the decision.

### Conclusion

Even though the Cleomenic War falls outside the time-frame that Polybius states will be covered in his histories, he gives a long account of it, stating that clarification of the situation in the Peloponnese was essential for his readers' understanding of Rome's advent into the Greek world. Polybius wished to instruct his readership as to how Rome had come to conquer the Mediterranean world by showing them the influence that *anacyclosis* had on systems of government. Does this result in an account of events by Polybius that stresses the unity of the Achaean league and fails to take into account the legitimate interests that the Aetolian league had in the Peloponnese?

As a brief examination of some of the evidence demonstrates, Polybius' narrative fails to mention important aspects of the relationship that the Aetolian league had with the Peloponnese. Given the close geographic proximity of Aetolia to the Peloponnese it is surprising that Polybius should present their actions as those of intruders. The existence of *proxenia* relations between the Aetolian league and many communities in the Peloponnese indicate that commercial and political connections existed across the Gulf of Corinth. More



importantly, the claimed mythical kinship link between the Aetolian league and Elis is another factor that Polybius states that his histories will not deal with, but which appears have been an important factor during the Hellenistic period. The Aetolians had crossed the Gulf of Corinth to assist the Eleans in 402BC when they faced virtual destruction at Spartan hands and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that since the fifth century, the Aetolians had been willing to assist the Eleans during times of extreme crisis.

Turning towards Sparta and Cleomenes' reforms there, it is difficult to accuse Polybius of exaggerating the role that socio-economic problems played in the decision to invite Antigonus into the Peloponnese, since he does not mention any. Although Polybius does later mention in passing that at some part of his reign Cleomenes proposed the re-distribution of land to gain popular support, he makes no mention of the impetus behind this offer. Plutarch, who emphasises the role that Stoic philosophy played in influencing Cleomenes' actions, makes no mention of him exporting his reforms elsewhere in the Peloponnese. Even if Cleomenes did carry out reforms to benefit the common man influenced by Stoic philosophy, they were limited to residents of Laconia. Polybius does draw attention to social and factional strife at Cynaetha, leading to:



*Constant mutual massacres between both sides, banishments, the robbery of people's goods and even the re-distribution of lands.*<sup>126</sup>

This was in a *polis* that was forced to join the Achaean league against its will and had a long association with Elis. So should its surrender to Aetolian forces be seen as a sign of socio-economic problems in the Peloponnese? Or does it indicate that possibly the Achaean league was essentially a political organisation and far from the unified body, the single *ethnos*, that Polybius' histories suggests?

---

<sup>126</sup> Polyb.4.17.4.

## Chapter Three.

### The evolution of Hellenistic leagues.

#### Introduction

In 187BC the inhabitants of Delphi erected an inscription recording the expulsion of citizens of the Aetolian league from properties they owned around the shrine. However, describing those listed as Aetolian is in some respects misleading. Of the fifty-nine individuals mentioned, only nine were from communities that would have been considered Aetolian during the archaic and classical periods; the remainder were from other areas in north-western Greece, notably West Locris.<sup>1</sup>

This aspect of the Aetolian league; its ability to absorb communities from other ethnic areas, has long been considered a paradox. Although Polybius describes the Aetolians in the worst possible manner, many communities voluntarily joined the Aetolian league during the Hellenistic period. Walbank accepts that this expansion was one of the few positive things about the Aetolians, since “it demonstrated the continuing ability of the Greeks to respond to a new political challenge with new solutions”.<sup>2</sup> Scholten agrees, commenting that the development of federal leagues during the Hellenistic period was, “a step towards overcoming the narrow local and regional parochialism of the classical *polis*, which had acted as a barrier to the creation

---

<sup>1</sup> Sherk RDGE no. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Walbank (1993) p. 157.

of geographically more extensive forms of participatory government".<sup>3</sup>

However, the Aetolians were not alone in absorbing communities from other ethnic groups into their league during the Hellenistic period. Scholten has pointed out how the successful expansion of the Aetolian league may have suggested to the Achaeans the potential of a similar approach in the Peloponnese.<sup>4</sup> Throughout his work, Polybius, though a native of Megalopolis in Arcadia, describes himself and other inhabitants of his native *polis* as Achaeans. In his account of the early history of the Achaean league, Polybius states that its success was due to the fact that:

*One could not find a political system and principle so favourable to equality and freedom of speech, in a word so sincerely democratic.*<sup>5</sup>

According to Polybius, the Achaean league developed into a state in which the entire Peloponnese:

*Only fell short of being a single polis in the fact of its inhabitants not being enclosed by one wall, all other things being, both as regards the whole and as regards each separate polis very nearly identical.*<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Scholten (2000) p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Scholten (2000) p.3.

<sup>5</sup> Polyb.2.38.6.

<sup>6</sup> Polyb.2. 37.11.



In his histories Polybius refers to the actions of the Achaean *ethnos*, or people, implying that all members of the Achaean league came to form a common identity.<sup>7</sup> We should question to what extent Polybius' depiction of the Achaean league was influenced by his attitude to the Roman conquest of Greece. In particular, how far does Polybius over-emphasise the unity of the Achaean league so that he can emphasise its later decline through the workings of *anacyclosis*? Walbank argued that the Achaean league was a federation in which an Arcadian like Polybius could identify with an institution which expanded under the leadership of a Dorian like Aratus to encompass the entire Peloponnese.<sup>8</sup> However, Walbank accepted that the bigger *poleis* in the Achaean league were never fully politically absorbed and in times of crisis often acted independently. As he admitted:

*It is prima facie absurd to suppose that cities like Argos, Corinth, Sicyon and Megara surrendered their political identity and felt themselves to be diminished because they had joined the Achaean federation.*<sup>9</sup>

Thus, it would appear that Polybius' claim that the various *ethne* of the Peloponnese united to form one *ethnos*, resulting in a distinct Achaean identity, and common political interests being held by all the inhabitants of the Peloponnese, is questionable.

---

<sup>7</sup> Earlier historians like Herodotus used the word *ethnos* in a very restricted way, and in practically every case is translated "people" or "nation". See Jones (1996) p. 316.

<sup>8</sup> Walbank (1985) p. 15.

Walbank accepts that the larger *poleis* in the Achaean league were never fully absorbed; we need not accept that the Megalopolitan Polybius' depiction of the Achaean league actually represented a federal state where Dorians, Arcadians and later Spartans shared a common identity and interests. In reality members of Polybius' family like his father Lycortas, and other Megalopolitans, such as Philopoemen and Aristaenus, dominated the Achaean league for long periods.

It is also assumed that the Aetolian and Achaean leagues were similar to each other, but there were important differences. Both the Aetolian and Achaean leagues expanded during the Hellenistic period far beyond the base that they had had during the archaic and classical periods. The Aetolians during the Hellenistic period absorbed many communities into their league that were not ethnically Aetolian. Despite this enlargement, the majority of Aetolian *strategoi* during the Hellenistic period came from communities that had been part of the Aetolian *ethnos* during the archaic and classical periods, suggesting that the Aetolians retained control over the political institutions they created during the Hellenistic period, or at the very least acted in unison to protect their interests.<sup>10</sup> In the Peloponnese, the

---

<sup>9</sup> Walbank (1985) p.36.

<sup>10</sup> O'Neil (1984-86) pp. 45-53 points out that the majority of the *strategoi* of the Aetolian league during the Hellenistic period, for whom we have a virtually complete list, come from areas that had always been Aetolian. The vast majority came from the area around Trichonion, followed in numbers by those who originated in Calydon and Pleuron. The



Achaean league came under the control of Aratus, a Dorian from Sicyon, and later of Arcadians from Megalopolis like Philopoemen and Aristaenus. Thus, although the Aetolian league's policy during the Hellenistic period was carried out by politicians who were largely from the Aetolian *ethnos*; in the Peloponnese the policy that Polybius represents as that of the Achaean *ethnos* was actually carried out by a mixture of Dorians and Arcadians.

The intention in this chapter will be to examine the evolution of the Achaean and Aetolian leagues from the archaic period onwards. My contention will be that although both the Aetolian and Achaean leagues changed radically during the Hellenistic period, their evolution from the archaic period onwards was very different. The Aetolians were a distinct *ethnos*, a people with a common identity, expressed through a common belief in a mythical past and shared religious beliefs, from at least the seventh century. This belief appears to have led to the Aetolians acting as a cohesive body within the political structures of their expanded league during the Hellenistic period.

On the other side of the Gulf of Corinth, the Achaean league appears to have been a political union from its inception, whose

---

situation in the Achaean league is very different: though we lack the epigraphic evidence available from Aetolia, the vast majority of *strategoi* mentioned by Polybius came from Megalopolis, including Philopoemen, *strategos* on eight occasions, and Lycortas, Polybius' father, *strategos* on at least three occasions.



founding members seem not to have held the belief that they formed a distinct *ethnos* as the Aetolians did. Thus, when both leagues reacted to changed political circumstances by expanding during the Hellenistic period, the Aetolians, because they were a distinct people, or *ethnos*, may have been able to retain political control over their league, while the original members of the Achaean league lost control over theirs.

### The evolution of the Aetolian League.

*In early times...piracy became a common profession amongst the Greeks and the barbarians who lived on the coast and in the islands...The same system of armed robbery prevailed by land; and even up to the present day much of Greece still follows the old way of life- among the Ozolian Locrians, for instance, and the Aetolians and the Acarnanians and others who live on the mainland in that area. Amongst these peoples the custom of carrying arms still persists from the old days of robbery.* <sup>11</sup>

In this passage Thucydides shows how Aetolian society was regarded as primitive and backward during the classical period. Despite this, shared religious beliefs appear to have played as important a role in the evolution of Aetolian society as they did

---

<sup>11</sup> Thuc. 1.5.1-6.1.

elsewhere in the Greek world.<sup>12</sup> Although aspects of Aetolian society were different from elsewhere in Greece, it appears that the Aetolians considered themselves, and were considered by others as an *ethnos* from at least the mid-seventh century.

The role that religious practice played in determining the character of the Aetolian *ethnos* is an important factor in explaining the policies followed by the Aetolian league during the Hellenistic period. Both the Achaean and Aetolian leagues absorbed new members during the Hellenistic period. The establishment of a religious centre at Thermon, dating from the seventh century, seems to have given the Aetolians during the Hellenistic period a sense of being a single *ethnos*, which did not exist amongst the members of the Achaean league. This might explain why, though the Aetolian league expanded rapidly to deal with the threat posed by Macedonia from 280BC, Aetolians from the *ethnos* retained control over the policy that their league followed during the Hellenistic period.

Examining firstly the coastal plain, its two principal settlements, Calydon and Pleuron dominate this area and communication links between Greece and Southern Italy.<sup>13</sup> Although little actually remains of Calydon, it is clear that in antiquity it was a large settlement, with an extensive shrine

---

<sup>12</sup> For the importance of religious activity in the formation of Greek political communities see Snodgrass (1980) pp.49-65.

<sup>13</sup> See Aristophanes, *Knights* L.75 for the strategic importance this area had for the Athenians in the fifth century.



adjacent to it that the other communities in the coastal plain appear to have used. The other major settlement situated in the coastal plain of Aetolia was Old and New Pleuron, which controlled access to the pass at Kleisure, connecting the coastal plain with the rest of Aetolia.<sup>14</sup>

Thermon, the principal Aetolian religious centre from the archaic period onwards and the political centre of the Aetolian league during the Hellenistic period, was located along the transhumance routes between the fertile area surrounding the lakes of the Aetolian interior and the mountainous area to the northeast.<sup>15</sup> The large size of the *agora* suggests that the site developed as a convenient meeting point for trade, and was in use from the Bronze Age until the late Hellenistic period.<sup>16</sup> The first building at the site, Megaron B, is of typical mesohelladic construction, and is a local adaptation of a type found elsewhere in the Balkans.<sup>17</sup> Its primary use is disputed, some arguing that it housed a local chieftain; others suggest that it was utilised for ritual purposes.<sup>18</sup> Though most of the archaeological evidence is problematic, extensive finds of Mycenaean pottery and utensils

---

<sup>14</sup> Woodhouse (1897) p. 34.

<sup>15</sup> Antonetti (1990) p. 23. For a more in-depth discussion of the role that transhumance played in Aetolian society see Bommeljé and Doorn (1991) pp. 81-97.

<sup>16</sup> See Antonetti (1990) p.153.

<sup>17</sup> Antonetti (1990) p.156.

<sup>18</sup> Antonetti (1990) p.156. The discovery of charred bones at the site would seem to indicate the latter.



have been made at the site, and Antonetti suggests that during the Bronze Age Aetolia developed a hybrid culture, mixing elements of both Mycenaean and northern Greek culture.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the Bronze Age and the onset of the Dark ages, Mycenaean culture in Thermon declined rapidly, and in its place the Aetolians began to renew their links with northern Greece, especially with Macedonia, Epirus and the Spercheios valley.<sup>20</sup>

During the archaic period the site at Thermon expanded and became the central religious centre for the Aetolian *ethnos*, and three temples were developed.<sup>21</sup> This development seems to be related solely to religious practice, since no *bouleterion* or *stoa*, indicating a corresponding political unity, was built before the Hellenistic period.<sup>22</sup> From the size and the extent of the buildings, it is self-evident that some form of centralised control must have existed to co-ordinate their construction. The expense needed to erect the temples and employ outside workmen in their design and construction suggests that some form of centralised control had developed in Aetolia concerning religious practice, and that the Aetolians developed this site to reflect their sense of national consciousness. The site indicates

---

<sup>19</sup> Antonetti (1990) p.160. Aetolian pottery was widely exported through northern Greece, as well as the Peloponnese and the Ionian Islands.

<sup>20</sup> Antonetti (1990) p. 158.

<sup>21</sup> For a description of the archaic site, see Antonetti (1990) p. 167-196.

<sup>22</sup> Scholten (2000) p.9 describes the one of the Temples at Thermon dating from the seventh century as, "architecturally and artistically avant-garde"

that the Aetolians had contact with the Peloponnese during the archaic period. The principal temple, dedicated possibly to Apollo or Artemis, was once thought to have been the work of Corinthian craftsman, though it appears that local craftsmen, possibly under Corinthian supervision, were responsible for its construction.<sup>23</sup> The metopes themselves cover a wide range of mythological topics and again show Corinthian influence in their design.<sup>24</sup> The most prominent figure represented on the metopes is Hercules, who is depicted on two series, one showing his entry into Olympia, and the other a hunting scene related to the Calydonian boar.<sup>25</sup> Although some scenes have a local origin, there is a distinct influence from the art of the eastern Peloponnese in their origins, especially from Argos.<sup>26</sup> Given the effort and co-ordination needed to develop this site, it appears that from the archaic period onwards the Aetolians considered themselves a distinct *ethnos*.

---

<sup>23</sup> Bookidis (1976) p. 911.

<sup>24</sup> Payne (1925) pp. 124-32 argues that the metopes are from a transitional period between Proto-Corinthian to Corinthian.

<sup>25</sup> See Antonetti (1990) p.174-178. It is argued by some that the long hair of the hero in the hunting scene would preclude it being Hercules. With Hercules playing such an important role in Aetolian mythology, the balance of probability as Antonetti argues, is with identification with Hercules. Other metopes found at Thermon depict Perseus with the head of Medusa, three goddesses who are unidentified, but are possibly the charites, Iris with a Centaur, the birth of Athena, and a Gorgon. See Antonetti (1990) p. 167-9.

<sup>26</sup> Antonetti (1990) p. 172.



This does not necessarily imply that the Aetolians had developed a political union; later additions to the site during the Hellenistic period suggest that it was only then that Thermon developed into a centre for political administration.

There was also a parallel development of a religious centre at Calydon.<sup>27</sup> Although the site at Calydon was destroyed in the first century BC, it is possible to reconstruct an adequate picture of the ceremonies carried out there from the description that Pausanias gives us of the ceremonies carried out in Patrae in the second century BC.<sup>28</sup> As at Thermon, it appears that the site at Calydon was dedicated to Artemis, suggesting that both the inhabitants of the Aetolian coastal plain and those in the interior shared a common religious heritage. The very fact that the inhabitants of the coastal plain developed their own religious centre at the same time as one was under construction at Thermon seems to indicate that this area had a distinct identity from the rest of the *ethnos*. Morgan suggests that the development of the site at Calydon may have been an attempt by the coastal communities to counterbalance the dominance of the inland parts of the Aetolian *ethnos*.<sup>29</sup> Although there were shared elements in religious practice at both sites, such as devotion to

---

<sup>27</sup> Antonetti (1990) pp. 243.

<sup>28</sup> Paus.7.18.8-13. Patrae was also, according to Pausanias, the only Greek State to aid the Aetolians in 279BC. See Paus.7.18.5.

<sup>29</sup> Morgan (1990) p. 8.



Artemis and Hercules, the communities of the coastal plain appear to have remained distinct from the rest of Aetolia.<sup>30</sup>

If a shared religious experience suggests that the Aetolians formed an *ethnos* from the seventh century onwards, is there any evidence for corresponding political structures? The evidence for the classical period is very limited.<sup>31</sup> From the archaic period onwards the Aetolians were willing to go to the effort and expense of developing a religious centre at Thermon to serve their *ethnos*. Despite this, it appears that the Aetolian *ethnos* remained politically disorganised until the Hellenistic period.

Turning to Thucydides' account of the Athenian expedition to Aetolia in 426BC, it appears that although the Aetolians were capable of co-operating with each other in matters of self-defence and religious matters, they remained politically disorganised. Although some elements of Thucydides' account, such as the Messenian accusation that an Aetolian tribe called the Eurytians spoke an almost unintelligible language and ate raw meat may not necessarily be accurate and are reported as hearsay, it appears on balance to reflect accurately Aetolia's fragmented political organisation. According to Thucydides, the Messenians informed Demosthenes, the Athenian commander, that he should attack three different

---

<sup>30</sup> Calydon also appears to have shared elements of religious practice with the Peloponnese. Antonetti (1990) p.253.

<sup>31</sup> See Larsen (1968) p. 79 and pp.195-205.

Aetolian communities in succession; firstly the Apodotians, followed by the Ophionians, and finally the Eurytanians.<sup>32</sup> As Thucydides' account of the campaign demonstrates, despite being split into different tribes, the Aetolians were capable of unifying in mutual self-defence during times of crisis, uniting to defeat the Athenian intruders, and the three tribes were capable of sending a joint embassy to seek assistance from Sparta and Corinth.<sup>33</sup>

One of the more intriguing and elusive comments regarding the political situation in Aetolia comes at the end of the campaign, when a Spartan force, according to Thucydides, retreated into an otherwise unknown area he called Aeolis.<sup>34</sup> Scholten and others suggest that this reference indicate that *poleis* on the Aetolian coastal plain like Calydon and Pleuron were at this point members of the Achaean league.<sup>35</sup> It has been suggested that Calydon and Pleuron's membership of the Achaean league may have prompted the transformation of the

---

<sup>32</sup> The evidence provided by Thucydides of the subdivision into tribes is taken by some as evidence of a primitive society in Aetolia during this period. However, as Nielsen and Roy (1998) pp. 5-44 point out, this was a feature of *ethne*, the Arcadians also being divided into tribes, such as the Azanians in northern Arcadia.

<sup>33</sup> See Thuc.3.100.1. This embassy was composed of Tolophus an Ophionian, Boriades an Eurytanian and Tisander an Apodotian.

<sup>34</sup> See Thuc.3.102.5. The text is disputed, but the punctuation follows Hornblower (1996) p. 516.

<sup>35</sup> Scholten (2000) p.13.



annual gathering at Thermon into an electoral assembly.<sup>36</sup> Scholten argues that although the Aetolians formed an *ethnos*, they remained politically disorganised until the Hellenistic period, and were unable to take advantage of their considerable manpower to regain control over Calydon and Pleuron, instead having to rely on the Thebans, and later the Macedonians.

There is little to be said for this view except these *poleis*' later membership of the Achaean league.<sup>37</sup> Thucydides does not state that the Aetolian coastal plain was under the control of the Achaean league in 426BC; the passage merely implies that he considered this region distinct from the rest of Aetolia. Nor is it evident that the Aeolis reference implies an Achaean origin. Thucydides later describes the ancient Corinthians as Aeolians; he may have been referring to earlier contact between the Aetolian coastal plain and Corinth.<sup>38</sup>

The discovery of an inscription in Athens recording the dispatch of an embassy to the Aetolian *koinon* from Athens in 367BC would seem to suggest there was some form of central

---

<sup>36</sup> See Bommelié (1988) pp. 57-61. Scholten (2000) p.9 n.33 promises to discuss the development of the Aetolian league during the archaic and classical period in a further volume.

<sup>37</sup> Scholten (2000) p.13. For the Thebans see Diod.15.75.2 and Macedonia under Philip II, Demosth 9.34.

<sup>38</sup> Thuc.4.42.2.



authority in Aetolia by the mid-fourth century.<sup>39</sup> It recorded an embassy sent to appeal to the Aetolian *koinon* for its assistance in gaining the release of a number of Athenian ambassadors that had been detained in Trichonion. The Athenians had dispatched these ambassadors on the understanding that they would not be detained, since they had earlier approached the Aetolian *koinon* and received its assurance that they would respect the Sacred Truce. On publication the reference to an Aetolian *koinon* in the inscription was seen as evidence that the Aetolians had evolved centralised political institutions; the date for the formation of the Aetolian league was duly revised upwards from 314BC.

Although accepting that the Aetolians did by this stage have a league, Walbank comments that:

*It is perhaps appropriate that our earliest reference to the Aetolian confederation should concern a breach of generally accepted convention, for throughout their history the Aetolians were renowned for their lawlessness and piracy.*<sup>40</sup>

Scholten, admitting that there was a *koinon* in Aetolia that was answerable to the rest of the Greek world, argued that some residents of Trichonion, if not the entire community, felt no

---

<sup>39</sup> This inscription was first published by Schweigert (1939) pp. 5-12. It has recently been re-published by Woodhead (1997) no. 48. The text used in this discussion will be that of the 1997 edition.

<sup>40</sup> Walbank (1993) p. 153.

compunction about seizing religious representatives whose inviolability was acknowledged by their league.<sup>41</sup>

However, the inscription is incomplete; we are given no indication of why the inhabitants of Trichonion detained these ambassadors. Of more interest is what it tells us about the relationship between Trichonion and the Aetolian *koinon*. Although the Aetolian *koinon* had agreed to the Sacred Truce, the inhabitants of Trichonion felt that they could over-rule, or ignore this decision. In view of Trichonion's proximity to Thermon, it would seem to suggest that those responsible, as Scholten argues, did not seem to be operating, "under any reciprocal assumption of responsibility to obey that government's decisions".<sup>42</sup>

However, would the Athenians have sent an embassy to the Aetolian *koinon* seeking its assistance in gaining the return of their ambassadors if that body was powerless to intervene?<sup>43</sup> The inhabitants of Trichonion may have violated a Sacred Truce; that does not mean that the Aetolians had different values from the rest of the Greek world.<sup>44</sup> The very fact that the Athenians asked the Aetolian *koinon* to observe the Eleusinian truce in the first

---

<sup>41</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Scholten (2000) p.15.

<sup>43</sup> The word *koinon* means little more than community. See Thuc.1.83.4. where Thucydides uses *koinon* to describe Athens.

<sup>44</sup> Scholten (2000) p.15.



place suggests that the behaviour of the inhabitants of Trichonion was exceptional.

Trichonion's action in seizing these ambassadors would seem to indicate that communities within Aetolia retained a great deal of local independence and that although the *koinon* seems to have had some power, it was probably limited to religious matters. This would seem to be supported by a reference in Arrian to Aetolian embassies sent to Alexander the Great; each of the three Aetolian tribes sending a representative at the beginning of his reign.<sup>45</sup> Since Arrian was relying on primary sources for his information, the reference appears to be accurate.<sup>46</sup> Bosworth argued that an Aetolian league with political authority must have existed in 367BC when the Aetolians gained control of Naupactus.<sup>47</sup> He suggests that the reference to a multiplicity of embassies was a deliberate ploy, suggesting that Philip II had earlier dissolved the Aetolian league.<sup>48</sup> Since this action would have been sanctioned by the Common Peace, Bosworth suggests that the Aetolians deliberately sent a multiplicity of embassies to give the impression that they were not united.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Arrian. *Anab.*I.10.2.

<sup>46</sup> Bosworth (1976) pp.164.

<sup>47</sup> Bosworth (1976) p. 164.

<sup>48</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 196 suggests that it was part of normal Aetolian diplomatic practice.

<sup>49</sup> Bosworth (1976) pp.166-8.



There are problems with Bosworth's argument. The only evidence that the Aetolians were promised, or gained control over Naupactus, comes in a reference in Demosthenes and another reference in Strabo that is directly lifted from Demosthenes.<sup>50</sup> Bosworth bases his argument around his reconstruction of a text that claims that Philip captured Naupactus and massacred the inhabitants on the resolution of the Achaeans, the opposite of the usual reading of the text involved.<sup>51</sup> Bosworth also assumes that Philip II and the Achaean league undertook a campaign against the Aetolians, even though we have no evidence for one. He also takes it for granted that there was a transformation between the fifth and the fourth centuries in Aetolian political structures under Theban influence, again an event for which there is no evidence. If one accepts Arrian's accuracy, it would appear that at the beginning of Alexander the Great's reign the Aetolians had not yet developed political structures beyond those needed for the administration of religious matters at Thermon.

Thus, although the evidence seems to suggest that the Aetolians considered themselves a distinct *ethnos* from the archaic period onwards, that does not necessarily imply that political unity existed before the Hellenistic period. Is this evidence that in some way Aetolian society was different from

---

<sup>50</sup> Bosworth (1976) p. 169. Demosthenes 9.34. Strabo (427).

<sup>51</sup> For Bosworth's reconstruction of this text, see (1976) p.170.

elsewhere in Greece, hence Polybius' depiction of their actions in the Peloponnese during the Hellenistic period as irrational? Nielsen, in his study of the Arcadian *ethnos* during the classical period, the society Polybius later came from, argues that although a state can be considered an *ethnos* if its inhabitants share certain common characteristics, such as a shared history and culture, this does not automatically translate into political unity.<sup>52</sup> As he points out, Arcadia was clearly an *ethnos*, since all of its communities seem to have shared a belief that they were a distinct people. Arcadians during the classical period regarded themselves and were regarded by other Greeks as a distinct people. Despite this, the Arcadians never developed a political union during the classical period, remaining politically divided, with some Arcadian *poleis* enjoying close and friendly relations with Sparta. Arcadian society during the classical period also shared many elements in common with that in Aetolia, such as a division of the *ethnos* into tribes.<sup>53</sup>

Thus elements of Aetolian society during the classical period was not all that dissimilar from the Arcadian one that

---

<sup>52</sup> See Nielsen (1996) pp.124-148, which discusses Arcadia in the classical period up until the *synoecism* of Megalopolis. Nielsen contends that at least four tribal states can be identified in Arcadia during the classical period, the *Eutresians*, *Kynourians*, *Mainalians* and *Parrhasians*. Nielsen contends, (p. 128) that these tribes, or ethnic units, functioned as distinct states and had defined territories. I would like to thank the author for sending me the relevant sections of his Ph.D. dissertation.

<sup>53</sup> Nielsen and Roy (1998) p.6.

Polybius came from. Does this have any implications for our understanding of the later expansion of the Aetolian league during the Hellenistic period? External threat plays a significant role in the formation of Greek political communities; the epigraphic evidence at Thermon begins to accumulate around 280BC, suggesting that previously Aetolian record keeping had been minimal. At the same time the first Aetolian coinage appears, indicating that radical changes took place in Aetolia, suggesting a transformation in the political situation related to the rise of Macedonia.<sup>54</sup> The changed political circumstances brought about by the growth of Macedonian power after the ascension of Alexander the Great to the throne of Macedonia seem to have provided the Aetolians with the impetus they needed to co-operate with each other to combat this threat. The result was that the Aetolians, who had always considered themselves a distinct *ethnos*, formed political institutions to protect their interests.

### The development of the Achaean League.

Is it correct to assume that a similar situation existed in Achaea? Larsen, following Polybius' account of the early history of the Achaean league, assumed that the Achaeans formed an *ethnos* from the archaic period onwards. In reality there is very

---

<sup>54</sup> Scholten (2000) p.25.



little evidence for this, and most of what there is comes from Polybius.<sup>55</sup>

According to Polybius' account, the Achaean league was re-founded in 280BC after the Macedonians had earlier dissolved it.<sup>56</sup> This dissolution was, Polybius stated, a temporary measure, since the Achaeans had formed an *ethnos* from the earliest times. However, Polybius only mentions two episodes regarding early Achaean history, an embassy to Southern Italy to mediate after riots against Pythagorean influence in government, and another sent to mediate between the Spartans and Thebans in the aftermath of the battle of Leuctra.<sup>57</sup> Little else is known about the Achaean league before the Hellenistic period, though it appears to have been allied with Sparta during the Peloponnesian War, and as late as 330BC fought for Agis III.<sup>58</sup> Polybius is remarkably silent about the early history of the Achaean league, though Walbank suggests that possibly he did not want to admit that there was no external evidence of either achievement or high principle in the Achaean league.<sup>59</sup>

Should Polybius' rather vague account of the early history and development of the Achaean league be taken at face value?

---

<sup>55</sup> Larsen (1968) pp.80-89.

<sup>56</sup> Polyb. 2.41.10-11. Errington (1969) p. 1 suggests that Alexander the Great was responsible.

<sup>57</sup> See Polyb. 2.39.11-10.

<sup>58</sup> Thuc.5.82.1. Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.17. Walbank (1957) p. 227.

<sup>59</sup> Walbank (1957) p. 227.

Polybius like many historians appears to have interpreted the past through his understanding of the present, and in this case, it was during a period of whose history Polybius probably knew very little, if anything. As Catherine Morgan points out, Polybius' account of the early history of the Achaean league does not fit the archaeological and topographical evidence from the archaic period, suggesting that Polybius' account of its development was an attempt to create a history for the Achaean league of his own day.<sup>60</sup> She argues that an examination of the communities that formed the Achaean league during the archaic and classical period shows that the original Achaean league was composed of four geographically diverse areas.<sup>61</sup> According to Morgan, there was nothing pertaining to the geographic structure of this area that suggests that the communities involved came together naturally. Rather, she contends that they created a political union to strengthen their position during the classical period. While other Greek political communities developed around a religious centre, the Achaean league's shrine at Aegium was specifically developed to provide a focus for the newly developed Achaean league in the sixth century. As she points out, there is little or no evidence for the existence of an Achaean state until the fifth century, when Herodotus

---

<sup>60</sup>See Morgan (1996) p. 195. She states, "It is important to recognise that Polybius' intention is to establish historical credentials, which might prove his contention that the Achaean league of his own day enshrined age-old principles of equality and fairness".

<sup>61</sup>See Morgan (1991) p. 131-163.

describes the Achaeans as an *ethnos*; the epigraphic evidence only comes at a later stage.<sup>62</sup> Though Aegium was developed to provide a focus for the Achaean league, at a later stage even this site appears to have fallen out of use, since the Achaean league decided in 188BC to stop holding its meetings there. Instead it changed to a rotating system, meetings alternating between the various members of the league, although Thermon remained the political centre for the Aetolian league throughout the Hellenistic period.<sup>63</sup>

Returning to Walbank's contention that the Achaean league during the Hellenistic period was a federal state with which all the states in the Peloponnese could identify, it would appear that as during the classical period, the Hellenistic Achaean league was essentially an artificial political creation, not a true *ethnos*. Thus, assuming that Polybius adopted an Achaean identity may be misleading, and like other *poleis* within the Achaean league, Megalopolis' elite may have retained much of their identity and local interests as a member of the Achaean league.

### Conclusion.

As Larsen pointed out, although *tyche* in Polybius' first two books is an important factor, Polybius states that it would be *phaulon*, a cowardly or stupid act, to describe the expansion of

---

<sup>62</sup>Hdt.8.73.1. See Morgan (1996) p. 194 for the epigraphy.

<sup>63</sup> See Badian and Errington (1965) pp.13-17 for a discussion of the decision.



the Achaean league as such. Larsen argues that for Polybius, along with the expansion of Rome, the expansion of the Achaean league ranks as a major achievement, calling for careful study of causation.<sup>64</sup> According to Polybius the expansion of the Achaean league led to a situation where the various *ethne* of the Peloponnese merged to form one *ethnos*.<sup>65</sup> Larsen suggested that we should share the same wonder that Polybius did at the fact that Spartans, Arcadians and others who had been absorbed into the Achaean league became content with this situation.<sup>66</sup>

This is exactly the situation that Polybius describes in his histories. However, despite Polybius' assertions about its unity during the Hellenistic period, it would appear that the members of the Achaean league were never an *ethnos*, or a distinct people. The subsequent history of the Achaean league shows that Sparta was far from happy with its membership, provoking the crisis that led to the destruction of Corinth in 146BC. <sup>67</sup> Yet at the same time, Polybius is generally recognised as an Achaean patriot. As Golan argues, Polybius was a "New Achaean", having been born in an Arcadian Megalopolis already incorporated and integrated into the Achaean league. He suggests that by Polybius' formative years it had become perfectly clear that no *polis* would

---

<sup>64</sup> Larsen (1968) p.218.

<sup>65</sup> Larsen (1968) p.219. n.1.

<sup>66</sup> Larsen (1968) p.219.

<sup>67</sup> See Paus.7.12.1-4.

be able to preserve its old freedom and optimal independence within this league.<sup>68</sup>

Polybius' intention was to explain to his readers how through the workings of *tyche* and *anacyclosis* Rome had conquered them. Therefore he may have wished them to visualise in his *Res Graecae* the Achaean league as a unitary body which encompassed the entire Peloponnese, resembling a single *polis*, so that he could contrast its fortunes with those of the city of Rome. If we accept Polybius' depiction of the Achaean league go unchallenged are we in danger of letting an emphasis on Achaean unity, related to Polybius' stress on the role of *anacyclosis*, influence our understanding of Rome's advent into the Greek world?

It cannot be doubted that elements of Aetolian society were different from elsewhere in Greece. Despite these differences, the Aetolians did have a homogeneous and coherent structure regarding religious practice from the archaic period onwards, along with a belief in a shared mythical past. Aetolians were viewed by others and appear to have regarded themselves as a distinct people or *ethnos* during the classical period. That the Aetolians did not develop centralised political structures until the Hellenistic period to complement this is relatively unimportant. What is important is that the Aetolians from the archaic period onwards had a sense of cohesion and unity,

---

<sup>68</sup> Golan (1995) p. 13.

regarding themselves as an *ethnos*, that appears to have led them to act in a unified manner within their expanded league during the Hellenistic period.

On the other side of the Gulf of Corinth, in the Peloponnese, it is by no means evident that the Dorian and Arcadian communities who joined the Achaean league during the Hellenistic period actually formed a single *ethnos* as Polybius implies. Rather, it would appear that communities joined the Achaean league because of their need for protection, and that at all times of extreme crisis its members acted in accordance with their own interests. Although Polybius stresses the unity of the Achaean league, he is talking about a political organisation that was dominated for long periods by Megalopolitans like Philopoemen, Diophanes, Aristaenus and Lycortas. It is this factor, the essentially artificial nature of the Achaean identity which Polybius espouses throughout his histories, that appears to have been an important factor in determining the reactions of the various powers with interests in the Peloponnese in the lead up to Rome's intervention in Greece.



## Chapter Four

### The Aetolian/Achaean alliance and the outbreak of the Social War.

#### Introduction

Polybius depicts the actions of the Aetolian league in the Peloponnese in the worst of all possible terms. However, the vast majority of Aetolian crimes and character defects that he mentions come in the context of the Social War between 220-217BC, fought after the Achaean league had decided to invite the Macedonians to assist them against Cleomenes. Given Polybius' desire to stress the unity of the Achaean league and his stated purpose to clarify the situation in Greece prior to Rome's involvement in Hellenic affairs, it must be asked whether his account of events should be taken as a neutral and objective account of events. Is Polybius' depiction of events in the Peloponnese favourable not only to the Achaean league, but in particular to Arcadian communities within it like Megalopolis? Aetolian interests in the Peloponnese, through their kinship links with Elis and the Peloponnesian outlook of communities like Calydon and Pleuron were extensive. It is likely that any radical change in the strategic situation in the Peloponnese would provoke some response. So should we regard Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese as violent aggression and piracy, or rather as an attempt to undermine an Achaean league that had recently allied with Macedonia?

The rise of Macedonia, in particular, the Aetolian policy of trying to turn Alexander's successors against each other, has been categorised by one historian as a struggle by the Aetolians to survive in a new hostile environment.<sup>1</sup> What gave the Aetolians the impetus they needed to increase co-operation with each other and form a political union was the threat they faced from Macedonia during the Hellenistic period.

Although this chapter will concentrate on events in the Peloponnese, it should not be forgotten that from the time of Alexander the Great, who allegedly threatened to punish the Aetolians on his return to Greece, the Aetolian league was in a state of almost perpetual conflict with Macedonia.<sup>2</sup> Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese during the Social War, as depicted by Polybius, should be seen in this context.

If the Aetolians were engaged in a struggle for control over the Peloponnese with the Macedonians, what was the rationale behind actions, which Polybius essentially describes as irrational? Prior to the decision taken by the Achaean league to invite the Macedonians into the Peloponnese to assist them against Cleomenes, Aratus appealed to the Aetolian league for assistance, although this was denied.<sup>3</sup> This appeal is not as

---

<sup>1</sup> Mendels (1984) p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> See Curt.6.1.17. for Alexander's remarks. For the seizure of Acarnania see Scholten (2000) pp.134-36. For detailed accounts of the Aetolian league and its conflict with Macedonia see Mendels (1984) pp.129-80 and Scholten (2000) pp.29-95.

<sup>3</sup> Plut.*Arat.*41.2.



strange as it might appear. The Aetolian and Achaean leagues allied in 238BC, and such was the level of co-operation between them in the following years that Larsen suggested that both were considered a unified body.<sup>4</sup> As Larsen pointed out, their co-operation was as surprising, in light of later events, as the co-operation between Athens and Aegina at Salamis, especially as the relationship broke down irrevocably afterwards.<sup>5</sup> For example, in 237BC, in response to a request from Corcyra, a fleet of ten ships belonging to the Achaean league was dispatched in assistance, with Aetolians helping in manning them.<sup>6</sup> Larsen claimed that the alliance between the two was one of the most hopeful of Hellenistic times and that its breakdown was a blow to Greek attempts to resist the growth of Roman power.<sup>7</sup> The alliance lasted for nearly twenty years, and it seems, from a reference in Polybius, to have been in existence as late as 220BC, just prior to the outbreak of the Social War.<sup>8</sup>

It is evident that the Achaean decision to invite the Macedonians into the Peloponnese was the determining factor in the breakdown of this alliance. As Scholten noted, the reasons behind the Aetolian decision not to send assistance to Aratus'

---

<sup>4</sup> Larsen (1975) p. 165.

<sup>5</sup> Larsen (1975) p. 160.

<sup>6</sup> See Polyb.2.9-10. Walbank (1957) p.160 and Larsen (1975) p. 165-66.

<sup>7</sup> See Larsen (1975) p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> It seems to have been technically in force in 220BC according to Polyb.4.7.4. See Walbank (1957) p.238.



appeal might be explicable by the assaults by the Achaean league, under Megalopolitan influence, on Elis.<sup>9</sup>

Again we should question to what extent Polybius' representation of the Achaean league and a common Achaean identity is based on his need to explain why the Romans ruled Greece through the workings of *anacyclosis* and his need to present the Achaean league as a single *polis* for this purpose. Larsen was correct in asserting that the Achaean/Aetolian alliance was remarkable in the light of Polybius' later account of the relationship between the two. Both leagues did co-operate closely during Aratus' expansion into Arcadia. However, this alliance was originally concluded between communities that had close links with each other across the Gulf of Corinth. By the time that the Macedonians, Aetolia's traditional foe, entered the Peloponnese, the expansion of the Achaean league and its absorption of Arcadian communities like Megalopolis changed the situation in the Peloponnese.

This section will look at the expansion of the Achaean league in relation to Aetolian interests in the Peloponnese. My contention will be that the Aetolian/Achaean alliance concluded in 238BC was based on an Aetolian desire to develop an anti-Macedonian bloc in the Peloponnese in conjunction with

---

<sup>9</sup> See Scholten (2000) p. 187. As Urban earlier pointed out, this assault was probably based on the need by the Megalopolitans to reacquire Triphylia, which had been given to the Eleans by Lydiades, their former tyrant. Urban (1979) p. 115-16.

communities on the northern coast of the Peloponnese with which it had ties. The policy that Plutarch presents of Aratus' attempt to rid the Peloponnese of pro-Macedonian tyrants was carried out in a situation where both the Achaean and Aetolian leagues were acting in close co-operation, especially during their expansion into Arcadia.

However, the Achaean league expanded rapidly and unlike the Aetolians, the original *poleis* that formed the Achaean league appear to have been unable to retain control when *poleis* like Megalopolis were absorbed into it as members. As the larger Arcadian communities were absorbed into the Achaean league they came to dominate its policy. So the Aetolians, who previously had allied with an Achaean league dominated by Aratus, were faced suddenly with a transformation of the situation in the Peloponnese, when the Macedonians were invited into this region under Megalopolitan pressure.

It was this decision which explains subsequent Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese. Polybius, as an Arcadian, depicted, and probably believed that Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese intended to assist the Eleans prior to the Social War were irrational actions motivated by a frenzied desire to loot. However, Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese during the Social War have to be seen in the context of Aetolia's wider conflict against Macedonia and the position that Aetolia's allies in the

Peloponnese found themselves in after the Achaean league's alliance with Macedonia.

**Aetolian interest in the Peloponnese and the expansion of the Achaean league under Aratus.**

As Larsen noted in his discussion of the Aetolian/Achaean alliance, before the expansion of the Achaean league under Aratus, the Aetolian league was one of the dominant powers in the Peloponnese despite the Gulf of Corinth.<sup>10</sup> The Achaean league at this point was confined to a relatively small area, not much larger than it had been during the classical period; the Aetolians and their allies in Elis appear to have controlled much of the western side of the Peloponnese. For example, in 240BC, the Aetolian league mounted a campaign against Sparta, and at the same time appears to have mediated a treaty of *isopoliteia* between Phigaleia and Messene.<sup>11</sup>

Aetolian interest in the Peloponnese during the third century, despite its separation from this region by the Gulf of Corinth, is not as surprising as it might at first appear. Given the claims of mythical kinship between the Aetolians and Eleans, it would appear that the Aetolians were simply supporting Elean interests in the Peloponnese. Pausanias mentions the presence of an Aetolian assisting the Eleans at Samikon on Elis'

---

<sup>10</sup> Larsen (1975) pp. 159-61.

<sup>11</sup> Polyb.4.39.9; 9.34.9. SIG<sup>3</sup> 472.



southwestern border with Arcadia in the 240s BC.<sup>12</sup> The long list of Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese mentioned by Polybius as having occurred in the 240s all appear to be connected with Elean expansion in north-western Arcadia.<sup>13</sup> The Aetolian league also seems to have tried to assist the Eleans in their attempt to gain control over Cynaetha in the 240s BC, when Polybius mentions internal troubles in this *polis*. Given that Cynaetha controlled the routes connecting Elis, Arcadia and central Achaean, it would appear that the Aetolians were attempting to assist the Eleans in their attempts to gain control over a disputed *polis*.<sup>14</sup>

Around the same time the situation in the Achaean league changed. It would appear, from the evidence provided by Polybius, that the Achaean league was re-founded in 280BC by the *poleis* of Dyme, Patrae, Tritaea and Pharae.<sup>15</sup> The Achaean league remained relatively small until 251BC, when Sicyon joined after Aratus deposed its pro-Macedonian tyrant in a bloodless coup. It was under his leadership that the Achaean

---

<sup>12</sup> Paus.5.6.1.

<sup>13</sup> See Scholten (2000) p. 117 for a list of Aetolian actions and the attempt by Elis to gain control over Triphylia and parts of northwestern Arcadia.

<sup>14</sup> See Scholten (2000) p.119.

<sup>15</sup> See Polyb.2.41.12, for the foundation of the Achaean League. By 253BC, it appears that Aegium, Bura, Carynea, Leontium, Aegira, Pellene and Olenus had joined. Polyb.2.41.13-15. Walbank (1957) p.233

league began its expansion.<sup>16</sup> This appears to have caused difficulties with the Aetolians, since Aratus, like the Eleans, desired to control the area around Cynaetha. Following his assumption of power at Sicyon, one of Aratus' first actions was to launch an attack against Locris and Calydon; he also seems to have tried to persuade the Boeotians to attack the Aetolians.<sup>17</sup>

However, Aratus was a close ally of the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt. Shortly after assuming power Aratus gained a subsidy of twenty-five talents from Ptolemy since, according to Plutarch, Sicyon was under threat from Antigonus.<sup>18</sup> Given the close proximity of Sicyon to the Macedonian garrison at the Acrocorinth, Aratus' decision to join the Achaean league seems to have been motivated by his desire to gain protection from the Antigonids. Why the Achaeans, if they were an *ethnos* as Polybius claims, allowed a *polis* that claimed a Dorian identity into their league is left unsaid, though it would appear to support Morgan's contention that the Achaean league had always admitted for membership *poleis* in need of protection. Aratus according to Plutarch, rapidly came to dominate the Achaean league, and in 243BC, in what Plutarch describes as the last and greatest achievement of the Greeks, he seized control over the Acrocorinth, removing the Macedonian garrison.

---

<sup>16</sup> See Plut.*Arat.*5.1. and 9.3. for the background to Aratus' accession to power in Sicyon.

<sup>17</sup> For the Boeotian attack on the Aetolians see Plut. *Arat.*16.1. Walbank (1984) p. 249.

<sup>18</sup> For the alliance with Ptolemy, see Plut.*Arat.*9.1-3. Walbank (1984) p.247.

Shortly afterwards the Achaean and Aetolian leagues allied with each other.<sup>19</sup>

Scholten depicts this as an alliance between “Greater Aetolia” and “Greater Achaea”.<sup>20</sup> This view presupposes a knowledge of later events that was not evident to those who concluded the alliance. The Achaean league that allied with the Aetolian league in 238BC was still a relatively small body whose membership was very different from the Achaean league that Polybius would later identify with. It would appear that the alliance was framed between communities that had a long history of contact with each other. Scholten points out the role that earlier connections between the Achaean league and the Aetolian coastal plain played in the conclusion of this alliance, since the Aetolian *strategos* responsible was Pantaelon of Pleuron, indicating that links between the communities on either side of the Gulf of Corinth may have assisted.<sup>21</sup>

Soon afterwards, the Achaean league under Aratus struck into the Peloponnese, with the aim, as stated by Plutarch, of ridding this region of its pro-Macedonian tyrants.<sup>22</sup> According to

---

<sup>19</sup> For the seizure of the Acrocorinth see Plut.*Arat.*18.1-26.2.

<sup>20</sup> See Scholten (2000) p. 136.

<sup>21</sup> Scholten (2000) p.136-7. He also suggests that Aratus’ Dorian heritage may have made him more open to contacts with the Aetolians, since while as he states, Aratus’ motives are hard to gauge, he may not have had the same negative attitude towards the Aetolians as the Achaeans did.

<sup>22</sup> Walbank (1984) p. 247.



a plan that appears to have been co-ordinated, both leagues launched a joint assault into Arcadia, the Aetolians concentrating on gaining control over Mantinea, Tegea and Orchomenus; the Achaeans attacking Cleitor, Telphusa and Heraea in an attempt to put pressure on Megalopolis.<sup>23</sup> The intention appears to have been to neutralise the pro-Macedonian states in Arcadia, notably Megalopolis. This policy led in 235BC to the pro-Macedonian tyrant of Megalopolis, Lydiades, resigning his tyranny and bringing his *polis* within the Achaean league.<sup>24</sup> Unlike *poleis* such as Argos and Corinth, it would appear that Lydiades negotiated the entry of Megalopolis into the Achaean league from a position of strength, since the following year he was elected Achaean *strategos*.

The entry of Megalopolis and other Arcadian communities into the Achaean league changed the situation in the Peloponnese. The original Achaean *poleis* were too small to counterbalance the rapid influx of new members from Arcadia into their league, and the different outlook that Arcadian *poleis* had from the league's original members placed Elis under threat.<sup>25</sup> As Scholten points out, the addition of Megalopolis and Argos to the Achaean league had changed the nature of the

---

<sup>23</sup> For Aetolian control over Mantinea, Tegea and Orchomenos, see Polyb. 2. 57.1. and 2.46.1-2 Scholten (2000) p.157-8.

<sup>24</sup> Plut.*Arat*.30.2.

<sup>25</sup> For the attempts by the Eleans to gain control over northern Arcadia from the 250s onwards, see Scholten (2000) pp. 118-123.

Achaean league, leading to an anti-Spartan policy which brought the newly expanded Achaean league into conflict with Cleomenes. Furthermore, this resulted in a softening of the anti-Macedonian policy of the Achaean league, despite Aratus' attempts to the contrary.<sup>26</sup>

It is in this context that the Aetolian league's refusal to grant assistance when Aratus appealed to it should be seen. Scholten argues that such was the pressure on Aratus from the rest of the league that he was unable to arrest the shift towards Macedonia, and became the champion of it in order to maintain his own position.<sup>27</sup> As Scholten points out, the Achaean league's decision to allow Macedonian troops to re-enter the Peloponnese placed the Aetolian league in their most dangerous position since the Celtic invasions. The Macedonians already controlled Opountian Locris, had allies in Boeotia and Phocis, and would control the Acrocorinth after they defeated Cleomenes, and Scholten argues that the Aetolian refusal to help the Achaean league was epochal and a missed opportunity.<sup>28</sup>

Speaking of an Aetolian refusal to assist the Achaean league as such is misleading. Rather, it would appear more accurate to say that the Aetolians were refusing to grant assistance to an

---

<sup>26</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 188. "Sparta's resurrection under Kleomenes only reinforced the Lakonophobic legacy these newcomers brought with them from generations of conflict, raising Lakedaimon to the *koinon*'s enemies' list".

<sup>27</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 189.

<sup>28</sup> Scholten (2000) p.189.



Achaean league that had followed an aggressive policy under Megalopolitan pressure against its ally in Elis. Scholten argues that the Aetolian refusal to assist the Achaean league was “a sign of their inability to see beyond their old parochial antagonisms for the sake of the common gain”.<sup>29</sup> This is an unfair assessment. The Aetolians must have been aware that the newly expanded Achaean league had encompassed communities like Megalopolis which had links with Macedonia and by failing to grant assistance, *poleis* like Megalopolis would turn towards Macedonia. We are told in fact that the Aetolians tried to block the pass at Thermopylae to prevent Macedonian troops reaching the Peloponnese.<sup>30</sup>

However, as Larsen earlier pointed out, after the death in battle of Margos of Cerynea, who Polybius describes as the elder statesman of the Achaean league, the alliance was never as close as it once was.<sup>31</sup> Larsen suggested that this was the result of Rome’s advent into Greek affairs, in particular the Illyrian Wars; this ignores the changes brought about by the expansion of the Achaean league into the Peloponnese. This expansion had been begun by an alliance between the Aetolian and Achaean leagues. The transformation of the situation in the Achaean league after

---

<sup>29</sup> See Scholten (2000) p.188.

<sup>30</sup> Polyb.2.52.8. Polybius states that this was just one of the many actions that the Aetolians undertook to prevent the return of the Macedonians to the Peloponnese.

<sup>31</sup> For a brief mention of the circumstances surrounding the death of Margos, leading a joint Aetolian/Achaean force, see Polyb.2.9-10.



the entry of Megalopolis and other Arcadian communities, and the change in the Achaean league's policy that resulted, radically altered the balance of power in the Peloponnese to the detriment of Aetolian interests. This change, and the way it transformed the situation in the Peloponnese, may explain subsequent Aetolian actions.

### The Social War; Aetolia and the Peloponnese.

After he had defeated Cleomenes Antigonus Doson founded a Hellenic league, which the Achaean league joined along with other states such as the Thessalians, Epirots, Phocians and Macedonians.<sup>32</sup> Early in 221BC, Doson died, and the young Philip V ascended to the Macedonian throne. This seems to have provided the Aetolian league with the impetus it needed to restart conflict with Macedonia in an attempt to recover the territory it had lost to Antigonus Doson in 228BC.

It is in this context, their wider conflict with Macedonia, that Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese before the outbreak of the Social War should be seen. Although Polybius is completely hostile towards the Aetolians, portraying their actions in the Peloponnese before the outbreak of the war as irrational, it appears that the Aetolians were attempting to disrupt the Macedonian presence in this region. As Scholten acknowledges, "Polybius' natural prejudices and preoccupations as a

---

<sup>32</sup> Walbank (1984) p.468.

Megalopolitan and an Achaean patriot distort his analysis and influence what he chooses to narrate”.<sup>33</sup>

Despite this, Scholten argues that looting was the important factor in defining Aetolian policy towards the Peloponnese, suggesting that, “adherence to archaic socio-economic traditions appears to have outweighed sober strategic thinking in the Aetolian *koinon*’s decision to back that policy”.<sup>34</sup> Did the Aetolian league’s leadership undertake an aggressive policy in the Peloponnese merely because they believed that the Achaean league’s expansion into Arcadia had opened up new opportunities for looting? It is what Polybius’ narrative suggests, but merely reflects his opinion. Or did the Aetolians view the Achaean league at this juncture simply as an extension of Antigonid power, and was their intention in trying to dismember it to undermine the Macedonian position in the Peloponnese? Aratus had requested the Aetolian league’s assistance shortly before the appeal to Macedonia, and there was opposition within *poleis* like Corinth and Sicyon over the decision to call on Antigonus. It appears that many communities within the Achaean league were opposed to the alliance with Macedonia, and the situation in the Peloponnese unsettled, a situation the Aetolians may have sought to exploit.

---

<sup>33</sup> Scholten (2000) p.201.

<sup>34</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 201.

Therefore, my contention will be that Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese before the outbreak of the Social War were not irrational acts of piracy as Polybius presents them. I will suggest that Polybius' portrayal of Aetolian actions in this region was based on his perception of them as an Arcadian and that his stress on Achaean unity, related to his wider intention, fails to take into account the competing regional and ethnic interests in the Peloponnese.

According to Polybius, the instigator of the conflict was Dorimachus, who was dispatched to Phigaleia to resolve a dispute between the inhabitants of that *polis* and the Messenians.<sup>35</sup> During his time there Dorimachus seems to have learnt that the Messenians were under pressure to join the Achaean league.<sup>36</sup> On his return to Aetolia an Aetolian raid was launched on the Peloponnese, which appears to have been aimed at dissuading the Messenians from allying with the Hellenic league and joining the pro-Macedonian bloc in the Peloponnese.<sup>37</sup>

Polybius presents this raid as an Aetolian crime that was hatched as part of a private conspiracy between Dorimachus and Scopas; an action he considered the greatest of all Aetolian outrages in the aftermath of Antigonus's death. Polybius states

---

<sup>35</sup> Polyb.4.3.5-6.

<sup>36</sup> Polyb.4.3.8-4.9.

<sup>37</sup> See Scholten (2000) p.204.



that on Dorimachus' return from Messene, he and Scopas conspired together, ignoring both the *strategos* and the board of the *apokletoi* who formed the Aetolian government, to launch an assault on the Peloponnese.<sup>38</sup> According to the plan they devised, diversionary raids would be launched on the coast of Epirus to distract Philip V; at the same time a force led by Scopas and Dorimachus would cross into the Peloponnese and march on Messene.<sup>39</sup> The plan was rapidly enacted and, according to Polybius, during their march across the territories of Patrae, Pharae and Tritaea, the Aetolians claimed that it was not their intention to inflict harm on anybody, though he alleges that looting did take place.<sup>40</sup> The raiding party reached Messene, avoiding confrontation with the assembled forces of the Achaean league at Megalopolis, and also with Taurion the Macedonian commander in the Peloponnese.<sup>41</sup> The force then split in two, most of the force returning to Aetolia via Elis; a smaller party proceeded back to Aetolia, launching raids against Pellene and Sicyon on the way.<sup>42</sup> The Aetolian raid on the Peloponnese was

---

<sup>38</sup> However, Polyb.4.5.1. admits that the Aetolian *strategos* Ariston was in bad health, and had largely ceded his powers to the two.

<sup>39</sup> Polyb.4.5.2-10. Walbank (1940) p. 28 compares this raid to the actions of English pirates during the reign of Elizabeth the First. Scholten (2000) p.204 argues that there is some indication that the raid received official approval. See also Eckstein (1995) p.142 for Polybius' depiction of the irrational behavior of the Aetolians at this point.

<sup>40</sup> Polyb.4.6.9.

<sup>41</sup> Polyb.4.6.7-12; 9.1-10.

<sup>42</sup> Polyb.4.9.10-13.5.

unsuccessful, and, according to Polybius, soon afterwards Messene joined the Hellenic alliance.<sup>43</sup>

Scholten argues that an Aetolian desire to loot explain this expedition, although he accepts that it seems to have been also aimed at trying to prevent Messene, an Aetolian ally, going over to the Macedonian camp. A subsequent meeting of the Aetolian assembly voted to maintain peace with all parties, provided that the Achaean league dropped its planned alliance with Messene.<sup>44</sup> It is also probable that the plan was intended to take advantage of the relative youth and inexperience of Philip V. The raid may therefore have been intended to divert Macedonian attention towards the Peloponnese and away from Acarnania.<sup>45</sup>

A more problematic event occurred in 220BC, when Dorimachos, Scopas and Agelaus led another group of Aetolians into the Peloponnese, this time with the intention of seizing the *polis* of Cynaetha located on the borders between Elis, Arcadia and Achaia.<sup>46</sup> According to Polybius, a faction within Cynaetha betrayed it to the raiding party. The raiding force proceeded on to Cleitor, which they were unable to capture because of the resistance they faced from its inhabitants, and they returned to Cynaetha, according to Polybius, committing a multitude of

---

<sup>43</sup> See Polyb.4.16.1.

<sup>44</sup> See Polyb.4.15.8-11.

<sup>45</sup> For Aetolian interests outside the Peloponnese during the Social War, see Scholten (2000) pp. 214-218.

<sup>46</sup> Polyb.4.17.1.



crimes on the way there and back.<sup>47</sup> On their return, the raiders offered Cynaetha to the Eleans, but the latter refused, and after an abortive attempt to install a garrison there, the Aetolian force retreated when the Macedonians advanced, according to Polybius, destroying Cynaetha in their wake.

We need to assess whether Polybius' depiction of Aetolian actions at this point should be taken as an accurate reflection of Aetolian intentions, or merely reflect his own perspective on this event, and his need to stress the Achaean league's resemblance to a single *polis*. Scholten argues that the attack on Cynaetha was a private venture, intended solely to gain loot, suggesting that, "unlike the expedition to Messene a few months earlier their (the Aetolians) present escapade at Kynaitha did not have the collective sanction of the *koinon*", and was indeed, "an opportunistic third-party action".<sup>48</sup>

Should Aetolian actions be seen in these terms? Or rather is Polybius' partisan attitude towards the Aetolians resulting in an account of events at Cynaetha that, though reflecting an Arcadian's perspective on Aetolian actions, fails to take into account strategic interests that the Aetolian league had in the Peloponnese? If one considers Cynaetha's location, on the border of Arcadia, Elis and Achaëa, it controlled the routes connecting the three regions. Despite his dismissal of events at Cynaetha at

---

<sup>47</sup> See Polyb. 4.17.3-19.7.

<sup>48</sup> Scholten (2000) p.205.



this point as a looting expedition, as Scholten pointed out about earlier Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese in the 240sBC:

*Certainly strategic considerations make collective Aitolian involvement in the northern Peloponnese in the 240s understandable. Kynaitha and Psophis, the main site under Eleian control in 221, are key points in the routes connecting Elis, Arkadia and central Achaia. As events during the Social War were to demonstrate, whoever controlled these cities controlled access amongst the three regions.<sup>49</sup>*

Elean forces were to play a vital role during the Social War; in the absence of a significant contribution by the Aetolian league in the Peloponnese during the Social War, Elean and Spartan forces carried out the bulk of the fighting on the Aetolian side in this region. The raid appears to have been intended to gain control over Cynaetha as a base for operations prior to the outbreak of war. According to Polybius, the Aetolian raiding force attempted to install a garrison at Cynaetha commanded by Euripidas before their withdrawal. The same individual was later appointed Elean *strategos*, commanding Elean forces in 219BC during the Social War; he was re-appointed to this position in 217BC.<sup>50</sup> Although Polybius depicts

---

<sup>49</sup> Scholten (2000) p.119.

<sup>50</sup> For Euripidas' appointment at Cynaetha see Polyb. 4.19.5. As *strategos* of Elis in 219BC Polyb.4.59.1. and later in 217BC, Polyb. 5.94.2. See also Scholten (2000) p.218. n. 54.

the Aetolian raid in a different light, it appears that the Aetolian raiders initially attempted to hand Cynaetha over to the Eleans. When the Eleans refused, they attempted to install as commander of a garrison there the very man who was later to co-ordinate Elean military actions against the Achaean league during the Social War. These two actions would seem to suggest that this raid was motivated by a desire to gain control over a strategically important location prior to the outbreak of war. As for the destruction of Cynaetha, this took place after the Aetolian attempt to capture Cleitor had failed and after the raiders had heard about arrival in the Peloponnese of a large Macedonian force led by Philip V. It was probably not an act of irrational destructiveness as Polybius depicts it, but one intended to prevent Cynaetha from being re-occupied and used as a military centre against Elis.<sup>51</sup>

There is the related question of why some inhabitants of Cynaetha betrayed their *polis* to the Aetolian raiders. This action is usually seen in the context of the socio-economic problems that may have existed in Cynaetha. It is suggested that the restored exiles may have betrayed Cynaetha to the Aetolians because they desired land re-distribution.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Scholten (2000) p.293.n.132. "The destruction of the town (Cynaetha) was a deliberate move to keep it from being reoccupied by forces hostile to the Aitolians and their friends in the region".

<sup>52</sup> Erskine (1990) p.127.



However, it appears from earlier events that a section of Cynaetha's inhabitants favoured allying with Elis rather than the Achaean league. Nor were the exiles necessarily from the lower classes. The Aetolian force gained entry to Cynaetha because one of the restored exiles held the office of *polemarch*, one of a number of officials who seem to have been responsible for Cynaetha's internal administration. Amongst his duties was ensuring that the gates of the *polis* were secured at night, and after overwhelming his colleagues, he opened the gates to the Aetolian raiders.<sup>53</sup> As recently restored exiles, it would be only natural that they would wish re-gain any property, including land, that had been confiscated at the time of their exile. As for the raid being undertaken by an Aetolian force, the Eleans had been trying to resist an expansionary Achaean league for much of the preceding decade. If the Achaean league was continuing to maintain pressure on Elis, the Eleans may not have had sufficient manpower to launch an assault on Cynaetha as well as guard against Achaean encroachment. Therefore the Eleans may have appealed for assistance to their claimed mythical kinsmen in Aetolia, who were also attempting to combat Macedonian encroachment in their affairs, as their forefathers appear to have done in similar desperate circumstances in 402BC.<sup>54</sup> It seems

---

<sup>53</sup> Polyb.4.18. 1-2. This office is best attested to in Athens. Originally a military figure, by the fourth century his duties were primarily concerned with internal administrative tasks within the *polis* of Athens.

<sup>54</sup> Diod.14.17.9.



natural that the Aetolian leadership would attempt to secure a base for operations in the Peloponnese prior to the outbreak of a wider war with Macedonia by exploiting dissatisfaction within this *polis*' citizenry over Cynaetha's membership of the Achaean league.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, it would appear that the raid on Cynaetha was not an unofficial venture by three Aetolians motivated by financial gain, but was intended to gain control over a strategically important location prior to a challenge by the Aetolian league and its allies to the Macedonian presence in the Peloponnese.

The second element in the Peloponnesian strategy decided upon by the Aetolian league's leadership prior to the outbreak of the Social War was to secure Sparta as an ally. This alliance is not as surprising as Scholten suggests it is.<sup>56</sup> Despite their earlier differences, it was in Sparta's interests to co-operate with the Aetolian league to secure its independence against further encroachment by the Achaean league. The Spartans under Cleomenes had recently attempted to gain control over the Peloponnese and had only failed because of Macedonian

---

<sup>55</sup> See Walbank (1936) pp. 64-71 for Aratus' failed attempts to capture Cynaetha. Polybius' condemnation of the inhabitants of Cynaetha that let the Aetolian force in is not that they betrayed the Achaean people or league, but rather the Arcadians. Polyb.4.20.1-21.12.

<sup>56</sup> Scholten (2000) p.210 draws attention to the Aetolian raid on Sparta in 240BC.

intervention.<sup>57</sup> It is not known when exactly the initial Aetolian approach to Sparta was made.<sup>58</sup> A possible indication of when this alliance was concluded comes when the Achaean league requested a further Spartan contribution of troops in the aftermath of the Aetolian raid on Cynaetha; the request was refused: Polybius stated that by this stage Sparta had already allied with the Aetolian league.<sup>59</sup>

As Walbank points out, the initial dispatch of Dorimachus to Phigaleia was probably to organise an alliance between Elis, Messene and Sparta. By gaining the Spartans as an ally, it would appear that the Aetolians were attempting to challenge the Macedonian position in the Peloponnese. As has been recently pointed out, for much of the war, "the Achaean league's military and political incompetence threatened its stability and internal

---

<sup>57</sup> Polyb.4.9.6-7. Sparta was a member of the Hellenic league and had assisted the Achaean league on its mobilisation during the Aetolian raid on Messene. Their contingent was posted on the border with Megalopolis in a reserve capacity, suggesting that they were not trusted.

<sup>58</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 211 suggests that Messene's decision to join the Hellenic league may have been prompted by their knowledge of an Aetolian approach to Sparta. As he points out, during the Cleomenic War, the Messenians had offered sanctuary to the entire population of Megalopolis, and this may have prompted them to seek closer ties with Megalopolis, and through it the Achaean league. As for Messene, Scholten points out that the disappointing Achaean performance during the Aetolian raids on the Peloponnese may have undermined the position of those who wished to ally with the Achaean league.

<sup>59</sup> Polyb.4.16.5. Walbank (1957) p. 463 states that at this stage Polybius was probably exaggerating the extent of Aetolian involvement with Sparta.



viability”.<sup>60</sup> Far from being irrational as Polybius’ portrays it, Aetolian policy before the war was an attempt to challenge the Macedonian position in the Peloponnese, by taking advantage of the relative weakness of the Achaean league and possible dissatisfaction amongst its various members over the alliance with Macedonia.

During the war itself, the Aetolians concentrated their efforts elsewhere, and apart from two exceptions in its opening stages, left the fighting in the Peloponnese to the Spartans and the Eleans.<sup>61</sup> If one analyses events in the Peloponnese at the outbreak of the Social War in 219BC, the Achaean league was forced to defend itself against a three pronged assault without any assistance from the Macedonians, who were campaigning against the Aetolians in Thessaly. The Spartans launched an assault on Megalopolis, capturing Athenaeum.<sup>62</sup> The Aetolians launched a surprise night attack against the city of Aegira, which failed because of resistance from its inhabitants, and Elean forces, operating under their Aetolian commander Euripidas, attacked the territories of Dyme, Pharae and Tritaea.<sup>63</sup> The intention appears to have been to dismember the Achaean league. The response by the Achaean league to the Elean assault

---

<sup>60</sup> Scholten (2000) p.220.

<sup>61</sup> See Scholten (2000) p. 214-218 for an account of Aetolian campaigns elsewhere.

<sup>62</sup> Polyb.4.58.2.

<sup>63</sup> Walbank (1957) pp. 513-14 suggests that this was a coordinated assault on the Achaean league. See also Larsen (1968) p.221. Polyb.4.58.2.



shows the degree to which communities within the Achaean league retained much of their independence and identity, since the three *poleis* attacked appealed to the Achaean league for assistance. The younger Aratus, who was *strategos* at the time, was unable to send any mercenaries through lack of money. As a result, the *poleis* involved decided to withhold their contribution to the league and instead used it to defend themselves by hiring mercenaries.

What is surprising is the existence of an official called a *hypostrategos* in command of this area, who played a vital role in defeating the Aetolian attack. The existence of an official who appears to have been in command of this area suggests that the region around Dyme retained a form of local government distinct from the central administration of the Achaean league. Nor was this an isolated occurrence. In 146BC, during the Achaean War, Polybius states that during the mobilisation of Achaean forces, the contingents from Elis and Messene were not called to arms, and that the men from the *synteleia* of Dyme failed to appear.<sup>64</sup> It would appear that the region around Dyme, which contained the founding members of the Achaean league, had a system of local government that was distinct from the rest of the league, something at variance with Polybius' emphasis on Achaean unity.

---

<sup>64</sup> See Larsen (1968) p. 221 for events in 219BC and Polyb.38.16.3-4 for the existence of this body in 146BC.

Although this is the only known case in the Achaean league of a form of local government, possibly there were other examples. There are parallels in Aetolia, where areas that were absorbed into the Aetolian league during the Hellenistic period such as Acarnania and West Locris enjoyed a separate status, being described as *tele* in official documents.<sup>65</sup> As Larsen points out, both Acarnania and West Locris had been distinct ethnic areas before they became members of the Aetolian league, and they appear to have retained some form of local government based on their ethnic identity after joining the Aetolian league.<sup>66</sup> The *synteleia* of Dyme was in existence from 219BC until 146BC; the possibility exists that other areas within the Achaean league may have had a form of local government based around on ethnic identity. The following year, the Achaean league was reorganised into three distinct zones. The first centred on Sicyon and the Argolid, the second on Arcadia, and the final one was presumably centred on the *synteleia* of Dyme. It was only after this, and at a comparatively late stage in the war, that the Achaean league was able to mount a successful defence against the Aetolians and their allies in the Peloponnese.<sup>67</sup>

Again, we need to question Polybius' stress on the unity of the Achaean league and to what extent its various members

---

<sup>65</sup> See IG IX(2).1.3B. for the inscription. Larsen (1968) p.197.

<sup>66</sup> See Larsen (1968) p.197.

<sup>67</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 220.



acted in unison, as Polybius suggests, or in accordance with their own interests. As Scholten points out, “for most of the conflict, Greater Achaia’s military impotence and incompetence left its territory such easy prey to pro-Aitolian forces that the internal stability and continued viability of the Achaean league became a real question”.<sup>68</sup> Most of the actual fighting against the Eleans and the Spartans in the Peloponnese was actually carried out by the Macedonians. Given that during most of the conflict, it only had to fight against Sparta and Elis, facing no real threat from Aetolian forces, the Achaean league proved itself to be powerless to defend its position in the Peloponnese without Macedonian assistance.

The war ended, according to Polybius, when news arrived of Hannibal’s victory over the Romans at the battle of Trasimene, and on the advice of Demetrius of Pharos, Philip V entered into negotiations with the Aetolian league.<sup>69</sup> At this point, Polybius’ attention turns towards the approach of Rome. It was at the peace conference in Naupactus that ended the war that Polybius has the Aetolian *strategos* Agelaus speak about the dangers posed by the war in the west coming to a close and the possibility of the victor turning his attention towards Greece.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> See Scholten (2000) p.220.

<sup>69</sup> Polyb.5. 101.6-10.

<sup>70</sup> See Polyb. 5.104.1-11.



By this stage the Macedonians had gained the upper hand in the fighting, and as Philip V's raid on Thermon demonstrates, the Aetolians were vulnerable to attack.<sup>71</sup> Philip V also gained control over Phthiotic Thebes, separating the Aetolians from Thessaly, while the capture of Zakynthos left Elis vulnerable to attack from the sea.<sup>72</sup> It would appear that the Macedonians had gained the advantage and that the Aetolians were ready to sue for peace.

However, according to Polybius, the Aetolian attitude towards the peace settlement changed, since:

*The Aetolians were at first quite happy with the terms of their peace with the Achaeans, as the fortune of the war had been adverse to them. They had in fact elected Agelaus of Naupactus as their strategos because they thought that he had contributed more than anyone else to the peace. But in less than no time they began to be dissatisfied and to blame Agelaus for having cut off all their sources of loot and destroyed their future prospects by making peace with all the Greeks and not with certain states only.*<sup>73</sup>

This reference to the Aetolian peace with the Achaean league is interesting as it gives us some indication of the situation in the Peloponnese. The Aetolian tactic of trying to split

---

<sup>71</sup> Polyb.5.8.1-9. Polybius 5.8.6. describes Thermon as the acropolis of the Aetolians.

<sup>72</sup> See Scholten (2000) p. 227.

<sup>73</sup> Polyb.5.107.5-7.

the Achaean league through the efforts of its allies in Elis and Sparta had only been thwarted by Macedonian intervention. This would seem to suggest that the Peloponnese would again be a centre for Aetolian attention once they had an ally powerful enough to assist them.

### Conclusion.

Polybius devoted a significant part of his work to clarifying the situation in the Peloponnese before Rome's advent into the Greek world. It should be questioned whether or not his desire to explain Roman rule to his Greek readership leads to a stress on Achaean unity that might not actually be an account of events that is representative to all view-points.

Polybius' account of events prior to the advent of Rome, especially the Aetolian league's actions in the Peloponnese before the Social War is probably what he sincerely believed to be a true and accurate account of events. It is by no means evident that it was anything more than Polybius' perspective. Polybius portrays Aetolian actions in the Peloponnese prior to the outbreak of the Social War, like the raids on Messene and Cynaetha, as irrational acts intended to loot and create havoc. This is how they may have appeared to an Arcadian like Polybius; it is by no means evident that the Eleans or Spartans regarded their Aetolian ally's actions in the same fashion. The entry of Macedonian troops into the Peloponnese placed the



Aetolian league in a dangerous situation; it is doubtful that they would have allowed such an event to occur without challenging it. Polybius is undoubtedly correct in stating that the retreating Aetolian force did destroy Cynaetha. His portrayal of this action as irrational and destructive though, reflects his own, Arcadian, judgement. It is evident that the Aetolian raiding force attempted to transfer control of this strategically important location to Elis, and subsequently to install a garrison commanded by the individual who would later co-ordinate Elis' assault on the Achaean league during the Social War. The raiders destroyed Cynaetha; it was because Philip V's unexpected arrival in the Peloponnese took them by surprise. Thus, this raid was not an irrational act of piracy, though Polybius undoubtedly believed it to be one. Rather it was part of a plan to gain an advantageous position in the Peloponnese at a strategically important location prior to the outbreak of war.

Polybius was clarifying events in the Peloponnese as part of his wider intention of explaining how the process of *anacyclosis* had influenced the systems of government in both Rome and the Achaean league. Polybius presented the Achaean league as a single *polis* in his histories for this purpose. Despite this, it would appear, from the co-ordinated assault by the Eleans, Spartan and Aetolian forces at the beginning of the Social War, that there was a struggle for control over the Peloponnese between the Aetolian league and Macedonia and her Arcadian allies prior to Rome's



involvement in Hellenic affairs. Despite Polybius' representation of their actions as piracy, the Aetolians had legitimate reasons for intervening in the Peloponnese and were able to coordinating a sophisticated military strategy with their allies in Elis and Sparta. Although Polybius describes the Aetolian league's actions in the Peloponnese as irrational, it would be contrary to his intention of writing *pragmatikê historia* to give any indication of the motives that the Aetolians had for intervening in the Peloponnese. For Polybius this was the mistaken approach to *historia* that Timaeus took.<sup>74</sup>

Polybius wrote with the intention of explaining Roman imperialism to his audience; it is impossible to separate his account of earlier events relating to the Peloponnese prior to Rome's involvement in Hellenic affairs from his intentions at the time that he wrote them. Polybius lived in a Greece that was under Roman control and started his histories when he was in detention in Italy. Given that he believed that the Roman system of government would eventually decline when *anacyclosis* resumed, the Greeks, who had reached the end of their own cycle of *anacyclosis* with the destruction of Corinth, would from that point onwards be on the ascendant. Thus, should his emphasis on the earlier unity of the Achaean league be taken at face value? Although Polybius' intention to clarify the situation in the Peloponnese prior to Rome's involvement in Hellenic

---

<sup>74</sup> Polyb.12.25I.4-6.

affairs was genuine, he appears to have done so in a manner that was favourable to Megalopolitan interests. The question should be asked whether or not the same applies to his account of Rome's later dealings with Greek states.

## Chapter Five

### Polybius, the Peloponnese and the advent of Rome

#### Introduction

Rome has long been considered an aggressive state that sought, as Polybius stated, to bring the entire Mediterranean world under its control.<sup>1</sup> Despite Rome's known desire to expand its influence, the extent to which it manipulated internal differences between states in Greece is a question that has attracted surprisingly little attention.<sup>2</sup> Is this because Polybius' emphasis on the unity of the Achaean league masks differences between Greek states over the Peloponnese that Rome exploited?

According to Polybius, in 207BC, an ambassador from Rhodes argued that the Aetolian league's alliance with the Romans during the First Macedonian War was harming Hellenic interests and that its consequences would be devastating for all of Greece. In a speech begging the Aetolian league to come to terms with Macedonia before it was too late, Polybius had the Rhodian delegate argue that the Romans were manipulating the situation to further their imperial ambitions. As he stated:

---

<sup>1</sup> See Polyb.1.1.5. Harris (1979) is the fullest detailed exposition of this case. North (1981) pp. 1-9 accepts Harris with some minor reservations. Even the word Rome, with its similarity to the Greek word for strength, had aggressive connotations for Greeks. See Erskine (1995) pp. 368-82.

<sup>2</sup> See Walbank (1963) pp. 1-13 for a discussion of Greek attitudes towards Rome during the First Macedonian War. All future references are from his selected papers.



*It is only too evident that the Romans, if they get the war in Italy off their hands.... will next throw themselves with their whole strength on Greek lands on the pretext that they are helping the Aetolians against Philip, but in reality with the intention of conquering the whole country.*<sup>3</sup>

What should we make of this passage?<sup>4</sup> In particular is Polybius giving us an accurate indication of Hellenic attitudes towards Rome at the time or one influenced by later events? Contacts with Greek communities in Southern Italy undoubtedly meant that many states, including the Aetolian league, which had *proxenia* links with this region, were aware of the Roman conquest of that region. Thus, Polybius' portrayal of Greek attitudes at this point may reflect what he believed to be contemporary concerns. The Romans had already shown their willingness to intervene in Illyrian affairs and the fears that Polybius has the Rhodian ambassador express about long-term Roman intentions seems plausible.<sup>5</sup>

In Polybius' account of the First Macedonian War he has a series of speeches, which present Greeks regarding Rome as an

---

<sup>3</sup> Polyb.11.6.1.

<sup>4</sup> See Walbank (1985) pp.150-1 for five examples of Polybius presenting the Romans as aggressive barbarians during the First and Second Macedonian Wars. Although Walbank argued that these were an accurate reflection of what was said at the time, he compared them to modern day anti-Americanism and general Greek prejudices about outsiders. See pp.153-4.

<sup>5</sup> For Rome's position in Illyria at this time, see Hammond (1968) pp. 1-21.

imperialistic barbarian aggressor from an early stage. How then should we view the initial alliance between Rome and the Aetolian league? The Romans appear to have made the initial approach to the Aetolian league to fight a war jointly against Philip V, so it is a problem to explain why the Aetolian league accepted.<sup>6</sup> The first Greek statesman that Polybius presents warning of the future danger posed to Greece by Rome is the Aetolian *strategos* Agelaus, several years before the alliance between the two.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the reasoning behind the Aetolian decision to ally with Rome is rarely explored, beyond stating a desire for loot.<sup>8</sup>

Again one must remember that Polybius is not only our only source for explaining how Rome came to control the Greek world, but that he is virtually our only source regarding internal Greek politics at that time. Many studies of Roman imperialism have been written; they mostly focus on Rome's intentions and actions, ignoring those of the Greek states that Rome came into contact with, especially how they used the advent of Rome to further their own interests.

Roman intervention in Hellenic affairs did not suddenly change the attitudes of the Greek states towards each other. Although its decision to ally with Rome is usually dismissed as

---

<sup>6</sup> See Harris (1979) p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> See Polyb.5.104.1-11. For a recent discussion of this speech see Champion (1997) pp. 111-128.

<sup>8</sup> This is the implication of Green (1990) p.299.



mere piracy, the Aetolian league had its own pre-occupations in 212/211BC, in particular its long-standing conflict with Macedonia and the alliance between the Achaean league and Philip V, which damaged the interests of Aetolia's allies in the Peloponnese. If one considers the situation in the Peloponnese prior to its alliance with Rome, during the Social War the Aetolian league had attempted to undermine the position of the pro-Macedonian communities within the Achaean league as part of a wider conflict it was fighting against Macedonia. The Romans explicitly promised the Aetolian league control over territories in Acarnania in Livy's account of the treaty between the two, an area over which the Aetolian league had lost control to Antigonus Doson in 228BC. An attempt by the Aetolian league to use Roman support to recover this region may provide their motive for allying with Rome.<sup>9</sup> However, were the Aetolians the only Greek league that attempted to turn Rome's move eastward to their own advantage?

Again there is the problem of assessing the extent to which Polybius' perspective on events influences our understanding of Roman imperialism. The danger posed to Arcadian *poleis* within the Achaean league like Megalopolis by Nabis' Sparta was an important factor in the speech made by Aristaenus urging the Achaean league to ally with Rome. Polybius presents the Achaean league acting as Rome's equal during much of this

---

<sup>9</sup> Livy 26.24.11. Scholten (2000) p. 230.



period; a presentation of events which he continues down to Callicrates' embassy in 180BC, which he marks as the decisive turning point in the relationship between the two. However, in line with his intention of writing instructive history, Polybius may have over-emphasised the unity of the Achaean league during its initial dealings with Rome, so that he could account for its decline once its system of government was corrupted by the onset of the final stage of *anacyclosis*. Flamininus removed Nabis from Argos in 195BC, restoring it to the Achaean league. Despite Polybius' presentation of the Achaean league as Rome's equal at this stage, it appears that the Achaean league's leadership was dependent on Roman support. Should the alliance formed between the two be seen as a need by Rome for respectable allies?<sup>10</sup> Or rather did Arcadian communities like Megalopolis seek to use Rome power to secure a dominant position over the Peloponnese?

It is this aspect of the advent of Rome into the Greek world that this chapter will consider; how Rome manipulated the internal differences and rivalries within the Greek world to extend its control. Although the Greeks may have feared the consequences, allying with Rome offered them the opportunity to further their own local ambitions. Polybius does provide a narrative regarding Rome's advent into the Greek world; it is one that is heavily influenced by his own regional perspective

---

<sup>10</sup> Badian (1970) p.40.

and emphasis on the role of *anacyclosis* in history. My contention will be that the Roman/Aetolian treaty of 212/211BC was an attempt by the Aetolian league to harness Roman power to regain the position it had lost in the Peloponnese during the Social War.

Once Rome had entered the Greek world, other states, notably the Achaean league, appear to have followed the Aetolian lead and sought to ally with Rome to gain an advantage over their rivals. Therefore, Arcadian communities within the Achaean league like Megalopolis sought an alliance with Rome to further their regional ambitions under the leadership of Megalopolitans like Aristaeus and Philopoemen.

### The treaty between Rome and the Aetolian league.

The treaty between Rome and the Aetolian league records the earliest known alliance between Rome and any state in Greece. Already known to some extent from Livy, the treaty itself was discovered in the 1950s in Acarnania in the form of an inscription partially recording its terms.<sup>11</sup> The details of the treaty, dealing with the division of the spoils from the actions that the allies were to undertake, appears at first sight to reinforce Polybius' presentation of the Aetolian league, and the alliance is seen merely as a joint looting expedition.<sup>12</sup> What is

---

<sup>11</sup> See Stsv 111.536.4-15 for the text of the treaty.

<sup>12</sup> Harris (1979) p. 207.

overlooked is that the Aetolian league was under the terms of this treaty gaining control over *poleis* within a specified geographic area. Livy records a clause stipulating that the Romans would return Acarnania to the control of the Aetolian league and it appears that the epigraphic text specifically outlined the area over which the terms of the treaty were to apply, though that section of the inscription is missing.<sup>13</sup> If one examines the epigraphic text, *poleis* that were captured by the Romans within the specified area were to be awarded to the Aetolian league, with the Romans gaining possession of the moveable objects.<sup>14</sup> If both were to capture a *polis* jointly, the Romans undertook to hand it over to the Aetolian league.<sup>15</sup> The treaty further specifies that if any *polis* wished to re-enter the Aetolian league voluntarily, the Romans would allow this, presumably a reference to *poleis* that had previously been members of the Aetolian league.<sup>16</sup>

Should this treaty be seen in terms of the desire for both for loot? Green, pointing out the Roman decision to set limits at Corycra, suggests that the Romans were aware that they were allying with a state of notorious corsairs.<sup>17</sup> Gruen has drawn attention to the fact that the Romans adopted Hellenic practices

---

<sup>13</sup> Sherk (1984) No.2 n 1.

<sup>14</sup> See Line 9.

<sup>15</sup> See Lines 10-15.

<sup>16</sup> Scholten (2000) p.230.

<sup>17</sup> Green (1990) p.299.



in treaties with Greek states, pointing out that the practice of framing an alliance for limited and specified goals was familiar to the Aetolian league. As he argues, the terms of the treaty reflect earlier alliances made by the Aetolian league with Alexander II of Epirus and Antigonus Gonatas to partition Acarnania and the Achaean league respectively.<sup>18</sup> However, Gruen accepts that the Aetolian league's intention in allying with Rome was to plunder, suggesting that the geographic boundary set at Corycra was to prevent the Aetolians from extending their influence into the Straits of Otranto.<sup>19</sup>

This treaty is also seen as a Roman response to the alliance that Philip V of Macedonia concluded with Hannibal in the aftermath of the battles of Lake Trasimene and Cannae. According to Polybius, Philip V agreed in 215BC to ally with Hannibal and not to make a separate peace with Rome until the Carthaginians had emerged victorious from the war in Italy. In the event of a Carthaginian victory, the Romans would be forced to withdraw from areas in Illyria where they had established interests. According to Polybius, these areas would be returned to the control of Macedonian allies, notably Demetrius of Pharos, who, according to Polybius, urged Philip V to make peace with

---

<sup>18</sup> Gruen (1984) p.19-20, n.30-31.

<sup>19</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 378. Rich (1983) p.187 suggests that the junior status that Rome had during this conflict was a source of resentment later on.

the Aetolian league on hearing of Carthaginian victories in Italy.<sup>20</sup>

All the above explanations assume that Rome was in a desperate situation and allied with the only possible Greek state it could find, the Aetolian league, which Polybius describes in the worst possible terms. Why the Aetolian league's leadership allied with the Romans is a question that receives little attention, except for accepting the Polybian depiction of Aetolians behaving as mindless pirates. Traditionally this conflict is called the First Macedonian War; it is viewed from a Roman perspective. It was not the First Macedonian War for the Aetolian league, which had been fighting against the Macedonians since the time of Alexander the Great. It appears that the Aetolian league allied with Rome to gain its assistance in regaining control over territory that it had previously lost to the Macedonians. After the Social War ended, Polybius presents Greek states approaching both Rome and Carthage, since, as he states, they feared the danger posed by the Macedonian victory, and presumably, the consequences of Philip V's alliance with Hannibal if Carthage was victorious.<sup>21</sup> By the time of the Roman

---

<sup>20</sup> For the text of the treaty see Polyb. 7. 9.1-17. Gruen (1984) p. 60 has drawn attention to the Semitic phraseology in the text, suggesting that Polybius had access to an original copy of the alliance between the two.

<sup>21</sup> Polyb.5.105.7-8. Polybius states a number of Greek states sent embassies to both the Romans and the Carthaginians in the aftermath of the Social War because they were afraid of Philip's daring.

alliance with the Aetolian league the threat of Macedonian involvement in the war in Italy was limited, ✓ since the Romans defeated Philip V and destroyed his fleet in 214BC.<sup>22</sup> Possibly of more concern to the Romans, given their presence in the Balkans, were Philip V's conquest of Dimallum and the Parthini and Atintani, all of which were within the Roman area of interest in Illyria.<sup>23</sup> It was after this string of successes by the Macedonians that the Roman/Aetolian treaty was concluded. The Macedonian capture of Lissus on the coast may also have been a determining factor in Rome's decision to seek an ally.<sup>24</sup>

If the Romans were defending their interests in Illyria against Macedonian encroachment, why would the Aetolian league assist them? Returning to the terms of the treaty, although they are usually seen as relating to the division of spoils, it is the Romans who gain the portable loot when they capture a *polis*. The Aetolian league gained control over all the territory seized within the area specified by the treaty, even if the Romans captured it without any assistance from Aetolian forces.

As Gruen points out, the Romans did generally use Hellenic models in concluding treaties with Greek states, so the terms of the treaty, especially those referring to the Aetolian league

---

<sup>22</sup> Plut.*Arat*.51.2. Both Harris (1979) p.206 and Gruen (1984) p.377 argue that after the Roman destruction of his fleet Philip V was never again in a position to send forces to assist Hannibal.

<sup>23</sup> Harris (1979) p. 206.

<sup>24</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 378.



gaining territory need not necessarily be seen as a sign of Roman disinterest or weakness. On the contrary, what appear to be the decisive factors in the conclusion of this alliance were Rome's need to prevent Philip V from expanding on his position in Illyria, and the Aetolian league's desire to recover territory it had lost to the Macedonians. Livy states that the treaty covered the area between the borders of Aetolia and Corycra. Though it is supposed that this might refer to a Roman desire to keep the Aetolians confined, this assumes that their principal objective was gaining loot. Livy's specific reference to the Romans handing over Acarnania to the Aetolian league is perhaps more significant.<sup>25</sup> The Aetolian league had suffered severe defeats at the hands of Philip V in this region in 219 and 218 BC on top of those inflicted earlier by Antigonos Doson.<sup>26</sup> The clause of the treaty relating to re-admission of *poleis* into the Aetolian league may indicate that the Aetolian league sought to recover the position that it had lost to the Macedonians in Acarnania and the Peloponnese.<sup>27</sup> Instead of being a piratical adventure, it appears that the Aetolian league was using its alliance with Rome to regain the position that it had lost to the Macedonians, both during the Social War and earlier in 228BC.

---

<sup>25</sup> Livy.26.24.11.

<sup>26</sup> Scholten (2000) p. 230.

<sup>27</sup> See Scholten (2000) p.230.

Though specified by Livy, Acarnania was not the only region where the Aetolian league had recently lost influence to the Macedonians. The alliance between the Achaean league and Macedonia had damaged Aetolian interests in the Peloponnese, and during the First Macedonian War much of the joint military effort between the Aetolian league and Rome took place in this region.

Roman conduct during this conflict has long been characterised as their fighting to the last Aetolian.<sup>28</sup> In reality it would appear that the Roman's primary role during the war was to assist the Aetolian league in its attempt to re-form the alliance with Elis and Sparta that had existed during the Social War. Turning to events during the war, initially the Roman fleet centred its operations towards securing the Aetolian league from the sea. In 211BC, Laevinus, the Roman commander captured Zacynthos and the Acarnanian port of Oeniadae.<sup>29</sup> The following year, the Roman fleet, along with an Aetolian force led by Scopas, attacked Anticyra in Phocis, apparently with the intention of severing Macedonian communications with the Peloponnese.<sup>30</sup> This was followed by an Aetolian appeal to the Spartans recorded in Polybius, and a counter appeal to the

---

<sup>28</sup> Most recently this allegation has been made by Scholten (2000) p.230.

<sup>29</sup> Livy. 26.24.15-16.

<sup>30</sup> Livy. 26.26.1-3. Livy states that Anticyra was in Locris. However the Acarnanian Lyciscus shortly afterwards mentions it as Anticyra in Phocis. See Polyb.9.39.2-3.

Spartans to remain neutral by an Acarnania embassy.<sup>31</sup> Polybius has a speech at this point, in which an Acarnanian ambassador states, during the debate in Sparta over whether to ally with the Aetolian league, that the Greeks were at this point threatened by a war with men of a different race who threatened to enslave them. The ambassador continues to state that by allying with the Romans, the Aetolian league had chosen to ally with barbarians, and that their actions would bring disaster on all the Greeks.<sup>32</sup>

Polybius presents this alliance as a betrayal of Greek interests. In reality the Aetolian league appears to have allied with Rome to gain its assistance in trying to undermine the Macedonian position in the Peloponnese. Along with their appeal to Sparta, Polybius mentions both Elis and Messene as Aetolian allies at this time. Once the Spartans had agreed to ally with the Aetolian league there was a change in Roman involvement in the conflict. According to Livy, Laevinus, the commander of the Roman fleet that was assisting the Aetolian league, reported to the senate that the war was going well and the legion in Greece could be recalled since the Roman fleet would be sufficient to keep the Macedonians away from Italy. This advice was acted upon and Laevinaus' successor, Sulpicius

---

<sup>31</sup>See Polyb.9.28.1-39.7 for the speeches by both delegations.

<sup>32</sup>Polyb.9.37.7.



Galba, was ordered to send home all his troops, apart from the *socii navales*.<sup>33</sup>

Livy illustrates the lessening of the risk of Macedonian intervention in the war in Italy by emphasising the decision to withdraw the Legion. Was this the real reason? The Romans had concentrated their efforts during the initial phase of the war in assisting the Aetolian league in recreating the anti-Macedonian alliance that had existed at the time of the Social War in the Peloponnese. Although the Romans may have been constrained by a lack of resources, it could also be postulated that the Romans were exploiting the hostility between the Aetolian league and Macedonia to further their imperial ambitions. Polybius presents the Romans as acting aggressively during this conflict. We might infer from this that the senate was already looking towards the post-Punic War situation when Rome would be free to intervene in Greece, and the alliance with the Aetolian league came at a time when the Romans were counterattacking after Hannibal's initial successes in Italy.<sup>34</sup> The decision by the Aetolian league to ally with Rome at an early stage suggests that they regarded the Romans as the most likely victors in the Punic War, just as Philip V had sought to capitalise on Hannibal's successes in Italy by allying with Carthage.

---

<sup>33</sup>Livy 26 28.1-9.

<sup>34</sup> The possibility of the Romans attempting to weaken Philip V is suggested by Harris (1979) p.207.

Nor was Rome the only power that the Aetolian league sought support from. It appears that the alliance between the two was part of a policy undertaken by the Aetolian league to gain the support of other powers in its campaigns against the Macedonians. In 211BC, when the Roman fleet captured the island of Aegina, they handed it over to the Aetolian league, which subsequently sold it to Attalus of Pergamum for the sum of thirty talents.<sup>35</sup> The following year, Attalus was elected as the Aetolian supreme commander, receiving the title of *strategos autokrator*, an honorific title. Despite this, the Aetolian alliance with Rome still remained. When in the following year Philip V opened talks with the Aetolian league, so that, according to Livy, neither the Romans nor Attalus would have any reason for invading Greece, the arrival of the Roman fleet and Attalus ended any hopes of a negotiated settlement.<sup>36</sup>

During the war, the Aetolian league's policy towards the Peloponnese remained focused on undermining the Macedonian position there. During 208BC, with Roman assistance, the Aetolians tried to cut communications between Macedonia and central Greece, fortifying the pass at Thermopylae, and the Roman fleet attempted to gain control over the coast.<sup>37</sup> Philip V proceeded to Phocis, where there was an attempt by

---

<sup>35</sup> Polyb.9.42.5-8.

<sup>36</sup> Livy. 27.33.4.

<sup>37</sup> Livy.28.7.3.

ambassadors from Ptolemy and Rhodes to negotiate between the Romans and Macedonians.<sup>38</sup> The conference was disrupted by an attack by the Spartan regent Machanidas on the Achaean league, and postponed.

However, in 205BC a radical change took place in the Achaean league that appears to have had far reaching implications for the Aetolian league's anti-Macedonian policy in the Peloponnese, when Philopoemen of Megalopolis was elected *strategos* of the Achaean league. Philopoemen had earlier served as Achaean *hipparch*, and during his time in office had reformed the Achaean cavalry force.<sup>39</sup> As *strategos*, we are told that he reformed the Achaean infantry, re-equipping the lightly armed troops, previously deployed, with Macedonian equipment such as the *sarissa* pike and the *aspis* shield. In 205BC the newly reformed Achaean army was paraded at the Nemean games.<sup>40</sup> Although both Polybius and Plutarch discuss the military implications of Philopoemen's actions, both are silent as to the political ramifications. Errington suggests that these reforms mark the beginning of a renewal within the Achaean league, with Philopoemen wishing to lessen the Achaean league's dependence on Macedonian support and break the ties that had

---

<sup>38</sup> Livy.28.7.13-14.

<sup>39</sup> See Polyb.10.22-24 and Plut.*Philop*.7.

<sup>40</sup> Plut.*Philop*.7. Paus.8.49.7. Livy 27.31.11. For a detailed discussion of the military reforms undertaken by Philopoemen, see Anderson (1967) p. 104-5.



existed between the two since the end of the Cleomenic War.<sup>41</sup> Errington points to the attempted plot by Philip V to murder Philopoemen in 205BC as evidence that he was a threat to the Macedonian position in the Peloponnese.<sup>42</sup>

Instead it appears that Philopoemen's reforms were a sign of the close relationship that existed between the Macedonians and Arcadian *poleis* within the Achaean league like Megalopolis. Philopoemen had served Macedonian interests in Crete in the period immediately before his election as *hipparch* of the Achaean league, and would do so again at a later stage. It is unlikely that Philopoemen would have introduced these reforms without Macedonian approval.<sup>43</sup> It would appear that Philopoemen's reforms indicate increased Megalopolitan co-operation with

---

<sup>41</sup> See Errington (1969) p.70. Errington himself admits that Philip V had a possibly undeserved reputation for assassinations. The number of failed attempts that he is credited with would seem to suggest, according to Errington, that these accusations were the fabrications of hostile contemporaries. Polybius portrays Philip as a tyrant who frequently murdered his political opponents; at one point Polybius presents Flamininus making a joke about it, with Philip replying with a sardonic smile, Polyb.18.7.6.

<sup>42</sup> See Plut.*Philop.*12.2.

<sup>43</sup> Plutarch suggests that Philopoemen refused Antigonus' offer that he should serve under him because he disliked taking orders, and instead went to Crete because he felt that he did not wish to be idle and because of the experience he would gain there. (Plut.*Philop.* 7.). As Errington (1968) p.28 points out, Philopoemen's activities in Crete coincided with Macedonian interests, and cannot have been independent of them.

Macedonia.<sup>44</sup> From Philopoemen's assumption of the office of Achaean *strategos* until his death in 183BC, all the known *strategoi* of the Achaean league were Megalopolitans, with Philopoemen himself holding the office on at least eight occasions.<sup>45</sup> In light of Philopoemen's close association with Macedonian interests on Crete, his reforms may have extended beyond the military sphere and encompassed political reforms that strengthened the position of Megalopolis and other Arcadian *poleis* within the Achaean league. Polybius, with his close association with Philopoemen and concern with showing the unity of the Achaean league, makes no reference to any political implications these reforms may have had. Given that the Aetolian league appears to have attempted to exploit divisions in the Peloponnese during the Social War, it appears probable that Arcadian communities like Megalopolis would try to consolidate

---

<sup>44</sup> Errington (1969) pp. 70ff is the only modern scholar to pay any attention to the political side that Philopoemen's reforms might have had, since Anderson strictly discusses the military implications.

<sup>45</sup> For lists of the *strategoi* of the Achaean league between 211-179-8BC, see Errington (1968) p. 300 (table II), who also lists reconstruction by earlier scholars. Apart from Philopoemen, other Megalopolitans who held the office of *strategos* in this period were:

Aristaenus, 199-9, 196-5, 188-7 and 186-5 BC.

Diophanes in 192BC.

Archon in 190-89 and 187-6BCBC.

Lycortas in 185-4, 183-2 and 182-1BC.



the dominance they had achieved within the Achaean league at the end of the Cleomenic War.

The victory of the newly equipped Achaean army over the Spartans at Mantinea and the death of the Spartan king Machanidas ended the Aetolian alliance with Sparta, and the Aetolian league concluded peace with the Macedonians shortly afterwards.<sup>46</sup> Did the Aetolians conclude a separate peace with Macedonia because they felt that the Romans had not adequately supported them during the conflict? Or because the defeat of the Spartans destroyed the anti-Macedonian alliance that the Romans had helped the Aetolian league create in the Peloponnese? Rich suggests that the separate peace between Aetolia and Macedonia may have been the result of the Aetolian league feeling that the Romans had abandoned them. He suggests that the Aetolian decision was a humiliation for Rome, because it came at a stage when they were able to release adequate resources to prosecute the war successfully.<sup>47</sup> This would seem to have some merit, since shortly after the conclusion of peace between the Aetolians and Macedonians, a

---

Philopoemen himself held the office in 208-7, 206-5, 204-3, 203-2, 201-0, 193-2, 191-0, 189-8 and 183-2BC. All the known *strategoi* between 201 and 181BC, when Hyperbatus of Dyme was elected *strategos*, were from Megalopolis.

<sup>46</sup> Gruen (1984) p 380 argues that after the Battle of Metaurus the Romans were in a better position to send troops to the Aetolians.

<sup>47</sup> Rich (1983) p.139.



Roman force under P. Sempronius Tuditanus arrived in Greece, but was unable to induce the Aetolian league to restart the war.<sup>48</sup>

However, it was not likely that the Aetolian league would wish to resume war against Macedonia after the defeat of Sparta, one of its principal allies in the Peloponnese. Furthermore, the assumption is that it was a Roman War, the First Macedonian War; it was for the Aetolian league the Fifth Macedonian War.<sup>49</sup> It was an attempt by the Aetolian league to gain the support of other states, of which Rome was one, to counter the losses that they had suffered to the Antigonids in the preceding decades. So should the dispatch of this Roman force be seen as an attempt by the Romans to coerce the Aetolian league back into the war? Or rather was it a separate campaign, mounted in Illyria to consolidate Roman interests? Tuditanus, after failing to persuade the Aetolian league to declare war on Macedonia, consolidated the Roman presence in Illyria by regaining control over the Parthini, and certain towns near Dyrrhachium, suggesting that the Romans were intent on securing their own interests.

The Aetolian league was not mentioned in the Peace of Phoenice that ended the war between Rome and Macedonia. Despite this omission, many of its allies were listed by Livy as Roman *adscripti* to the treaty; Ilium, Attalus, Pleuratus (an

---

<sup>48</sup> Livy.29.12.1-4.

<sup>49</sup> Scholten (2000) p.230.

Illyrian), Nabis, Elis, Messenia and Athens.<sup>50</sup> Although questions have been raised as to the authenticity of this list, virtually all of the states mentioned had been allies of the Aetolian league since the time of the Social War.<sup>51</sup> The decision by the Romans to list so many Aetolian allies as *adscripti*, would seem to suggest, as Harris argues, a forward looking policy by the Romans, with their presence creating the conditions for an almost inevitable appeal for military assistance.<sup>52</sup> Though they were not included in the actual peace agreement, the Aetolian league had been forced by the changed situation in the Peloponnese to come to separate terms with the Macedonians. Given that the Romans had listed so many of their allies as *adscripti*, the Aetolians may have felt that in any future conflict the Romans would regard them as potential allies.

Again, one must question whether Polybius' depiction of Aetolian intentions during the First Macedonian War are those

---

<sup>50</sup> Livy.29.12.14. The description of Nabis as tyrant of Sparta suggests a Polybian origin.

<sup>51</sup> Derow (1979) p. 6-7 argues that the list is derived from Polybius. Harris (1979) p. 207-8 argues that the Romans intended to list these states as friends of Rome, and create a condition whereby they could lay the foundations for a future appeal by these states to Rome. Gruen (1984) p. 382 states that it was normal Hellenic practice. More recently, Habicht (1995) p. 198 is more sceptical as to the authenticity of the list. However, there had been a mythical kinship relationship between the Aetolian league and Elis since at least the fifth century, the Illyrian was called after Pleuron in Aetolia, and Sparta and Messene had been Aetolian allies since the end of the Cleomenic War. The inclusion of Ilium as an *adscriptus* reflects Roman beliefs about the Aeneas legend

<sup>52</sup> Harris (1979) p. 207-208.



of an Arcadian who was unable to accept that the Aetolian league had legitimate interests in the Peloponnese. The Achaean league's alliance with Macedonia had placed the Aetolian league in a difficult position. The Aetolians had been unable to defeat the Macedonians by themselves when they had tried to reverse Antigonid gains in the Peloponnese and defend their allies Elis during the Social War. It would seem natural that they would seek support from other powers to continue this policy.

Roman intentions are less easy to assess. It appears unlikely that the Romans allied with the Aetolian league to prevent Philip V intervening on behalf of the Carthaginians in Italy, though this possibility cannot be ruled out entirely. Roman support for the Aetolian league appears to have been partly defensive, preventing Philip V from using the opportunity posed by the Punic War to detach Roman allies in the Balkans. It was also in some respects aggressive. By approaching the Aetolians and supporting their efforts to regain control over territory they had lost to the Macedonians, the Romans were able to lay down the groundwork for their future intervention in the Greek world. As Polybius has the Rhodian ambassador and others claim, the Romans seem to have exploited the problems that the Aetolian league faced to extend their influence over the Greek world.

In understanding Rome's entry into the Greek world, it is essential to appreciate both the conflict between the Aetolian and Achaean leagues in the Peloponnese and its exploitation by the



Roman intruders. Roman involvement with the Aetolian league during the First Macedonian War undoubtedly led to them gaining an appreciation of the position in the Peloponnese. After they had intervened in the Greek world, their decision to seek, and later cultivate an alliance with the Achaean league after 198BC, may reflect an attempt by the Romans, and Flamininus in particular, to manipulate the situation in the Peloponnese to their own advantage.

### Nabis, Sparta, the Peloponnese and the Aetolian appeal to Rome.

The Aetolian/Roman alliance of 212BC appears to have been motivated by the Aetolian league's desire to use Roman power to regain its position in the Peloponnese and defend its allies there. The issues raised by the Achaean league's alliance with Rome in 198BC show how Polybius' emphasis on the unity of the Achaean league distorts our understanding of Roman imperialism and Flamininus' behaviour in the Peloponnese. Before considering this alliance we should first examine how the situation in the Peloponnese was altered by the assumption of power at Sparta in 205BC by Nabis. Few Spartan kings have provoked more controversy than Nabis; Polybius characterises him as the worst of all possible characters. However, Nabis, as Shimron pointed out, suffers in that only Polybius' extremely biased account of his reign survives, and in light of the excesses

he is accused of committing, it is best to remember that we have no other evidence about Nabis' character.<sup>53</sup> For example, Polybius alleges that Nabis committed robbery, torture and piracy on a regular basis and that his supporters were rapists, highwaymen and burglars.<sup>54</sup> In one incident Nabis is accused by Polybius of using a device reminiscent of a medieval iron maiden made in the image of his wife to extract taxation from his fellow Spartans.<sup>55</sup>

Modern scholars also see Nabis' actions as a continuation of the socio-economic reforms carried out in Sparta during the late Hellenistic era.<sup>56</sup> Most recently Cartledge has argued that Nabis' claim to be restoring the mythical Lycurgan constitution, like those of his predecessors, was merely propaganda. It appears that Nabis's behaviour was more akin to a Hellenistic tyrant than a Spartan king.<sup>57</sup>

As in the case of Cleomenes' reign, Polybius makes no mention of Nabis cancelling debts in Sparta, though he does later

---

<sup>53</sup> Shimron (1972) p. 79-80.

<sup>54</sup> Polyb. 13.6.4.

<sup>55</sup> Polyb.13.7.1-11. Shimron (1972) p. 87 suggests that there may have been some truth to these accusations, stating that many Spartans, especially those in positions of authority or wealth may have favoured co-operation with Macedonia instead of reviving the traditional Spartan regime.

<sup>56</sup> Shimron (1972) p.83 Piper (1986) p.95 and Cartledge (1989) p.67 point out that Nabis, despite his name, was actually a member of one of the Spartan royal families.

<sup>57</sup> Cartledge (1989) p.67-69.



accuse him of carrying out this measure in Argos.<sup>58</sup> Most of the socio-economic reforms that Nabis is credited with come from his rule in Argos, not Sparta, though Polybius' text is extremely fragmentary at this stage. Although Nabis carried out changes in Spartan society, there is no actual evidence regarding his motives, and his reforms in Argos may have been an attempt to gain popularity.

It also appears that Nabis was responding to the changes that were taking place in Spartan society, not initiating them. During this period Sparta was undergoing a transformation, constructing defensive walls for the first time in its history, a sign of increased urbanisation in a city previously known for its rural characteristics. Nabis' reign also saw a change in the structure of Spartan society, with an increase in grave goods indicating increased wealth, along with changes in Spartan sculpture, showing that Sparta was becoming more open to outside influences.<sup>59</sup> However, many of these changes had begun before Nabis' assumption of power and were by no means completed by the time of his death.<sup>60</sup> Nabis was in many ways a product rather than the cause of changes that were ongoing in Spartan society. Although Nabis was willing to use Sparta's once glorious past as propaganda, he was faced with a changing

---

<sup>58</sup> Eckstein (1987) p. 228.

<sup>59</sup> Cartledge (1989) p. 71-72

<sup>60</sup> Cartledge (1989) p.72.



situation; his reforms seeming to have been undertaken to strengthen Spartan<sup>1</sup> militarily.

The defensive nature of Nabis' reforms can be seen if one turns towards his decision to enfranchise a large number of slaves. Again there are problems. Polybius describes those who benefited from Nabis' reforms as *douloi* and Livy describing them as *servi*, balanced by the evidence from Strabo that the institution of *helotry* survived in Sparta.<sup>61</sup> The use of *helots* in the Spartan military had a long tradition; Cleomenes shortly before his defeat had freed six thousand *helots* to serve in his army.<sup>62</sup> Taken in connection with the other changes in Spartan society that happened during Nabis' reign, such as the development of a navy and a treasury to regulate financial affairs, his actions were probably designed to increase Sparta's military power. Another point to consider is the role that Philopoemen's reforms in the Achaean league had in prompting these changes. With the Achaean army reformed and apparently under firm Megalopolitan control, it is interesting to consider Nabis' reforms in the context that this threat posed to Sparta. Sparta had, ever since the Cleomenic War, been engaged in conflict with an expansionary Achaean league in which Arcadian communities like Megalopolis had an extremely influential

---

<sup>61</sup> Cartledge (1989) p.69. For the survival of this institution in Sparta see Strabo.8.365. Shimron (1972) p. 90. Nabis appears to have had extensive support from the *Perioeci* towns. See Shimron (1972) p. 88.

<sup>62</sup> For the earlier use of slaves in the Spartan military see Hunt (1998) pp.171-5.

position. Philopoemen and a reformed Achaean army posed a threat to Sparta; it would seem natural that Nabis would undertake any measure necessary to ensure Sparta's continued independence.

Nabis' assumption of power also presented the Aetolian league with an opportunity to again challenge the Macedonian position in the Peloponnese, when in 204BC war broke out between the Achaean league and Sparta. According to Polybius, war erupted when Nabis refused to return a number of horses stolen from Megalopolis.<sup>63</sup> Whether this story is true, or was the sole cause of the war is unknown, but for the next three years a border conflict was waged between Sparta and Megalopolis. In 201BC, Nabis attempted to seize Messene, a move that Polybius condemns, since it was in alliance with Sparta at the time.<sup>64</sup> However, Messene had co-operated with the Aetolian league during the Social and First Macedonian Wars, so possibly Nabis, with Aetolian encouragement, was trying to reform the anti-Macedonian alliance in the Peloponnese that had existed since the time of the Social War.

The following year, when Philopoemen was Achaean *strategos*, he mobilised the Achaean army secretly, and defeated Nabis' army at Sellasia.<sup>65</sup> Shortly afterwards Philopoemen

---

<sup>63</sup> Polyb.18.8.3-7.

<sup>64</sup> Polyb. 16.13.1-3.

<sup>65</sup> Polyb.16.37.1-38.



departed for Crete where he served Philip V's interests.<sup>66</sup> This move appears surprising, especially as Nabis continued his attacks to the extent that the inhabitants of Megalopolis were forced to grow their crops within its walls.<sup>67</sup> Such was the resentment felt by the Megalopolitans at Philopoemen's departure for Crete, according to Plutarch, that moves were made to exile him. They were only prevented from doing so by the intervention of the Achaean league's *strategos*, Aristaenus of Megalopolis, even though Plutarch states that he was a political opponent of Philopoemen.<sup>68</sup>

This episode raises two questions. Firstly, why did Philopoemen leave the Peloponnese for Crete at a time when Megalopolis was under attack from Nabis? Secondly, why did Aristaenus support one of his political opponents? The answer lies in the situation in Crete at this time. Nabis, through the development of a navy, had made Crete an important area of operations, especially for mercenaries, and there is evidence of an extensive Spartan presence there during the Hellenistic period.<sup>69</sup> There were also extensive Macedonian interests on the island, and it is not inconceivable that Philopoemen was sent

---

<sup>66</sup> Plut.*Philop.*13.1.

<sup>67</sup> Plut.*Philop.* 13.1.

<sup>68</sup> Plut.*Philop.* 13.4

<sup>69</sup> Errington (1969) p.34 draws attention to the large army of mercenaries recruited in Crete by Nabis.



there as Philip's representative.<sup>70</sup> Errington has suggested that at this time Philopoemen and Aristaenus were close political allies and the breakdown in the relationship between the two came later; this would seem to be contradicted by Plutarch's assertion that they were not.<sup>71</sup> It appears that Aristaenus intervened to save Philopoemen from being exiled because his presence in Crete was as part of the close co-operation between the Macedonians and Arcadian *poleis* like Megalopolis within the Achaean league. The war between the Achaean league and Sparta continued after the Roman invasion and given its seriousness was of primary importance to the Achaean league.<sup>72</sup>

Should the outbreak of war between Sparta and the Achaean league be seen in a wider context? Given their interest in Greece and the end of the Second Punic War, the Romans may have been aware of it, along with the possibilities it raised, since Nabis was a Roman *adscriptus* at Phoenice. For the Aetolian league, the resurgence of Sparta and the attempt by Nabis to gain control of Messene in 202BC created an opportunity for them to intervene in the Peloponnese and undermine the

---

<sup>70</sup> See Errington (1969) pp.34-48, for an account of rival Spartan and Macedonian interests in Crete at this time. Nabis appears, according to Errington, to have had a close relationship with Cnossos, while the Achaean league and Macedonia had a close relationship with Gortyn.

<sup>71</sup> Errington (1969) p 74, suggests that Aristaenus' election as *strategos* in 199BC was a victory for Philopoemen's party and policy.

<sup>72</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 381.

Macedonian position there. It is in this context that the Aetolian embassy asking for Roman intervention in Greek affairs should be seen. The problem lies with the dating, since Livy does not give an exact date and Appian dates it to after the appeal by Rhodes and Pergamum to Rome.<sup>73</sup>

Livy informs us that the Aetolian league approached the senate and requested a renewal of the alliance between the two, along with Roman aid to combat the growth of Philip V's power. But the Romans refused, stating that they would not assist because of the Aetolian league's earlier separate peace with Macedonia. Regardless of the dating of the supposed appeal, one is left with the problem of why the Aetolians would have appealed to Rome, and why the senate chose not to exploit this pretext for intervention in Greece.<sup>74</sup>

The Romans may have refused the Aetolian request for assistance because they felt betrayed by the decision to seek a separate peace with Macedonia. However, at the time it had concluded peace with Macedonia, the Aetolian league had in fact

---

<sup>73</sup> For Livy's account of the embassy see Livy. 31.29.1ff, and the appeal 31.29.4. For Appian's reference and dating see App.*Mac.*4. Derow (1979) p. 7, suggests that the most likely date for the appeal was the one suggested by Appian, that is late 201BC, after the Rhodian appeal to Rome. Earlier Holleaux (1921) pp. 293-7, rejected the appeal mentioned by Appian, arguing that probably after the battle of Zama, the Aetolians appealed to Rome for help against Philip but were rebuffed; evidence in Holleaux's eyes that the Romans did not wish to intervene in Greece. Harris (1979) p. 213 is sceptical about the veracity of Appian's reference.

<sup>74</sup>Briscoe (1973) p.130.



little alternative, since Sparta had been defeated, leaving its Peloponnesian strategy in ruins, and there was no sight at the time of the Romans offering significant assistance. So if the Aetolian league did in fact make an appeal to Rome, we are left with the problem why it was rejected. There is the possibility of hurt Roman pride or indifference, but if Philip V was planning a campaign in Illyria, it was in Rome's own interest to assist the Aetolians, regardless of what had happened at the end of the First Macedonian War.<sup>75</sup> If the Aetolian league's appeal to Rome ties in with the war between the Achaean league and Sparta, and Nabis' attempt to seize Messene, it may be the case that the Aetolians were again trying to involve Rome in their efforts to undermine Macedonian interests in the Peloponnese. In light of Aetolian interests in this region, especially the need to secure Elis' position, the resurgence of Sparta under Nabis' leadership created the conditions for an Aetolian intervention in the Peloponnese, hence the appeal to Rome.

This might be the precise reason why the senate rejected the appeal. With the war with Hannibal virtually over, Rome was looking towards expanding eastwards, and probably did not wish to become openly involved with Aetolian league.<sup>76</sup> Rome

---

<sup>75</sup> Badian (1958) p. 61-6 and Errington (1972) p. 131-2 suggest that Illyria was the Roman's principal concern at this time.

<sup>76</sup> Derow (1979) p. 8 argues that the Romans did not wish to return to Greece as the allies of the Aetolians, because of the earlier predictions that they would return on the pretext of assisting the Aetolians.



was an aggressive state and the Aetolian league was probably aware of the threat it posed. But there were also advantages to be gained by Greek states who co-operated with Rome. The Aetolian league had, during the First Macedonian War, attempted to regain territory it had lost to the Macedonians by allying with Rome, and undoubtedly wished to renew their alliance to achieve the same goal. The Roman refusal should not be seen as a slight to the Aetolian league, but rather in terms of the Romans trying to gain maximum flexibility in their future operations. If they had agreed to renew the alliance with the Aetolian league at this point, the Romans would have done so on formal terms, with a treaty similar to the one in 212BC concluded between the two. In 212BC the Romans needed the Aetolian league. At the end of the Second Punic War they were free to exploit the situation in Greece to their own advantage.<sup>77</sup> By refusing to enter into an alliance with Aetolia before the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War, the Romans were leaving their options open, making it clear that the alliance they had concluded with the Aetolian league in 212BC was at an end.

---

<sup>77</sup> Derow (1979) p. 8 points to the calculated and consistent nature of Roman dealings with the Aetolian league.

## The Aetolian and Achaean league's reaction to Roman intervention

Having rejected the Aetolian league's approach, Rome entered the Second Macedonian War in response to embassies from Athens and Rhodes requesting its assistance against Philip V. By the end of the war, both the Achaean and the Aetolian leagues were Roman allies, with the Aetolians playing a significant part in the Roman campaign. Rome was in alliance with two powers that had spent much of the previous twenty years in almost continual conflict with each other over their rival interests in the Peloponnese. With Polybius, indirectly through Livy at times, serving as our principal source, we naturally find an account of these events that is favourable to the cause of the Achaean league, and to Megalopolitans in particular.

My contention in this section will be that the Romans sought the support of a compliant elite who needed their support in order to secure their interests in the Peloponnese. Thus, Flamininus exploited the need by Megalopolitans to remove the threat from Nabis and retain their dominant position within the Achaean league. Polybius presents the relationship of the Achaean league and Rome as one between equals in the period immediately after the alliance between the two. I shall contend that the Megalopolitan leadership of the Achaean league sought to use Rome's intervention to secure its own interests in the Peloponnese.



If one examines Roman actions during the war, the Romans firstly approached the spring assembly of the Aetolian league in 199BC, along with an embassy from Athens, to persuade the delegates to ally with Rome.<sup>78</sup> We are informed that the majority of the assembly favoured allying with Rome, but that the Aetolian *strategos* Damocritus had the decision postponed to an extraordinary meeting, where the vote was in favour. Why did Damocritus decide to delay the meeting until later in the year? Gruen suggests that the delegates were waiting to see which side would win and that the Aetolians could equally have allied with the Macedonians since their only concern was to regain the territories they had recently lost.<sup>79</sup> This is taking a naive view of Aetolian elite's attitude towards Macedonia. In the light of the fact that both states had been in a state of almost perpetual conflict from the time of Alexander the Great, Aetolian co-operation with Macedonia was unlikely. From the speech recorded in Livy it would appear that the Aetolian league was presented with the choice of either allying with Rome or facing destruction. As Derow points out, when the Romans approached the assembly, they made it clear that the Aetolian league should regard itself as lucky to have this opportunity. The Roman attitude, as he points out, was that despite their previous

---

<sup>78</sup> Livy.31.29-32.

<sup>79</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 444.



alliance, by this stage the Aetolians were regarded simply just as one other Greek state.<sup>80</sup>

However, this speech, like any other, should not necessarily be taken as a completely accurate reflection of what was said. Although not specified, it is evident that the Aetolian league entered into an alliance with the Romans under the impression that it would stand to gain in the post-war settlement. Judging from their reaction these promises were not fulfilled. As Derow acknowledges:

*The impression one gets (at the outbreak of the Aetolian/Syrian War) is that they (the Aetolians) thought they knew (the terms of the alliance) and were astonished and angry when Flamininus informed them that in fact they did not. How this situation could have come about cannot be firmly established, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Aetolians, when they joined the Romans in 199BC, were either told or allowed to believe something that wasn't true. Or again, they might have been told something that was true in 199BC, but that ceased to be true on the morrow of Cynoscephalae.*<sup>81</sup>

All we know for certain is that at the outbreak of the Aetolian/Syrian War the Aetolian league felt that Flamininus' settlement had betrayed its interests. If one looks at the Aetolian

---

<sup>80</sup> Derow (1979) p.8. As he points out, the Romans make it clear who exactly is the master in the situation.

<sup>81</sup> Derow (1979) p.12.

league's participation during the war, a force of six thousand men was sent to join Flamininus in 198BC, and Roman and Aetolian forces co-operated closely. The evidence suggests as Larsen pointed out, that Roman and Aetolian officers trusted each other, with the Aetolian contingent saving the Romans on at least one occasion.<sup>82</sup> The Aetolian league played an important role in assisting the Romans during their the campaigns against Philip V. Although they were traditional rivals of Macedonia, the conclusion could be drawn that the Aetolians did so in the expectation that they would be rewarded for their efforts. Again, one must return to the situation in the Peloponnese, in particular, the Macedonian alliance with the Achaean league. It is not inconceivable that the Aetolian leadership might have been led to believe that Roman victory over Macedonia would secure the position of its Peloponnesian allies like Elis.

The Achaean league entered the Second Macedonian War allied with Macedonia and still involved in a war with Nabis.<sup>83</sup> As the war with Rome began to go badly for Philip V, he made an overture to the Achaean league aimed at trying to retain its support. Initially Philip offered that if the Achaean league provided troops to replace Macedonian forces in garrisons at Corinth, Chalcis and Oreus, he would fight their war against Nabis. This request was refused but Philip returned Hera,

---

<sup>82</sup> Polyb.18.21.5 and Livy 33.7.7. Larsen (1968) pp.384- 385.

<sup>83</sup> Larsen (1968) p.381.

Alipheria, Triphylia and Orchemenos to Achaean jurisdiction.<sup>84</sup> The Achaean league in return remained neutral and continued to pursue its war against Nabis.<sup>85</sup> Errington suggests that the Achaean *strategos* Cycliades was exiled because he was a pro-Macedonian and that the Achaean league was moving away from its alliance with Macedonia under Philopoemen's leadership, though the possibility that his exile was related to the war with Sparta going badly appears just as probable.<sup>86</sup> The relationship between the Achaean league and Macedonia formed at the end of the Cleomenic War was based on the need of Arcadian *poleis* like Megalopolis for an ally powerful enough to ensure their position against their rivals in the Peloponnese such as Sparta, the Aetolian league and Elis. After Rome entered the Greek world, they may have begun to fear the post-war repercussions of remaining allied with Macedonia, especially as Nabis was a Roman *adscriptus*; a fear that Flamininus exploited on Rome's behalf.

### Flamininus and the Achaean alliance with Rome.

198BC saw T. Quinctius Flamininus appointed as commander of the Roman forces in Greece. He was to play a decisive role in defining Roman policy in Greece both during

---

<sup>84</sup> See Briscoe (1973) pp. 174-5 who accepts that these areas were returned to the Achaean league at this time.

<sup>85</sup> Eckstein (1976) p. 139.

<sup>86</sup> Polyb. 18.1.2. Errington (1969) p. 87.



and in the immediate aftermath of the Second Macedonian War. Little is known about him before he became Consul. He appears to have been born around 229/228BC and only held relatively minor appointments before he was elected Consul.<sup>87</sup> Flaminius may have spent a long period of time in Tarentum, gaining experience of dealing with Greeks and their customs.<sup>88</sup> Given Flaminius' role in the foundation of Roman control in Greece, his actions and their intentions have caused intense debate. Briscoe described Flaminius as a man who used underhand methods, who fundamentally could not be trusted.<sup>89</sup> However, instead of seeing Flaminius' actions as his alone, it might be more accurate to see them as a reflection of a policy decided on by the senate, which Flaminius had to implement. The Romans entered the Second Macedonian War with the intention, as Polybius states, of expanding their power over Greece. Any commander sent by Rome must have been aware that this was his mission and would have used any opportunity presented to achieve it.

According to Livy, when in 198BC Flaminius' forces were besieging Elata, a delegation arrived informing him that

---

<sup>87</sup> Badian (1971) p. 107.

<sup>88</sup> Badian (1971) p.108, Livy.29.13.6. For the debate on whether Rome had experts or not, the most important contribution in recent years is Gruen who argues that there were no experts on eastern affairs within the Roman elite, though in his discussion of Flaminius, Gruen admits that he was an exception. See Gruen (1984) pp.214-17.

<sup>89</sup> Briscoe (1972) p.22.

Aristaenus, the *strategos* of the Achaean league, was willing to ally with Rome.<sup>90</sup> Flamininus responded by sending a mission composed of his brother L. Quinctius along with representatives from Attalus and Rhodes to the Achaean assembly at Sicyon.

The role of Aristaenus and his exact identity is a matter of some debate, since there were two Achaean politicians with this name. One, from Dyme, served as *hipparch* of the Achaean league in 207BC. The other earlier saved Philopoemen from being exiled, and is identified by Plutarch as a Megalopolitan.<sup>91</sup> Which Aristaenus Livy refers to is unclear, but the evidence and circumstances would seem to point towards an identification of the Aristaenus in 198BC with Aristaenus of Megalopolis.<sup>92</sup>

Arcadian communities within the Achaean league, in particular Megalopolis, had played an important role in creating the alliance between the Achaean league and Macedonia at the end of the Cleomenic War. Aristaenus' willingness to abandon Macedonia in favour of an alliance with Rome was a controversial decision, and the speech recording the arguments he made in favour of allying with Rome appears to reflect

---

<sup>90</sup> Livy.32.18.3-5.

<sup>91</sup> Eckstein in recent years has identified the politician in 198BC not as a Megalopolitan but as a citizen of Dyme. See Eckstein (1995) p. 200. However, he gives no evidence for this claim, and appears ignorant about Deininger's article associating the Aristaenus in question with Megalopolis.



contemporary concerns about the situation in the Peloponnese held by Megalopolitans which Flamininus subsequently exploited.<sup>93</sup> As the debate of the Achaean assembly shows, many of the delegates felt that their interests would not be served by allying with Rome, and many delegations, including Megalopolitans, wished to retain the Achaean league's alliance with Macedonia. Aristaenus' speech, in particular its emphasis on the threat from Sparta and the need to secure the Achaean position against Nabis, gives us some indication of why he favoured abandoning the alliance with Macedonia in favour of one with Rome.<sup>94</sup>

Aristaenus, according to Livy, argued for an abandonment of the alliance with Macedonia, not out of fear of Rome or necessity, but because Macedonia had failed to assist the Achaean league in its war against Nabis. The delegates, according to Aristaenus, would be correct in abandoning Macedonia, since it had abandoned the Achaean league to Sparta.<sup>95</sup> As he states at one point in the speech:

---

<sup>92</sup> See Deininger (1966) pp. 376-380 for a detailed discussion of the evidence. He argues that the Aristaenus mentioned in 198BC was from Megalopolis. Supported by O' Neil (1984-86) p.36.

<sup>93</sup> Eckstein (1995) p. 200.

<sup>94</sup> Briscoe (1973) p. 203 argues that this speech contains considerable embellishments over the Polybian original.

<sup>95</sup> For the speech see Livy 32.21ff.



*Then Philip tried to draw our fighting men away into Euboea, by promising that he would carry on the war against Nabis. But when he saw that we neither voted him that support, nor were willing to be entangled in his war with Rome, he forgot that alliance which he now makes so much of, and left us to be pillaged and plundered by Nabis and the Spartans.*<sup>96</sup>

This, the threat posed to the Achaean league by Nabis, and the Macedonian inability to assist, permeates Aristaenus' speech. For example at one point Aristaenus asks:

*Why then does Philip not defend us, his old allies, from Nabis and the Romans?*<sup>97</sup>

This theme of Macedonian betrayal of Achaean interests, may have been an attempt by Polybius to defend Aristaenus against accusations that he had betrayed Greek interests. Philip V's dubious character, his alleged murder of both Arati, his adultery with Aratus the younger's wife and his sexual abuse of virgins is also mentioned by Aristaenus as a justification for abandoning Macedonia in favour of Rome.<sup>98</sup> These were the sort of crimes committed by tyrants before the working of *anacyclosis* transformed this type of government into aristocracy.<sup>99</sup>

Aristaenus' speech also reflects the fear that if the Achaean

---

<sup>96</sup> Livy.32.21.10-11.

<sup>97</sup> Livy.32.21.13.

<sup>98</sup> Livy.32.21.24.

<sup>99</sup> Polyb.6.7.7.

league did not change sides it would be left isolated and vulnerable, especially in view of the Roman alliances with the Aetolian league and Nabis. In the new circumstances brought about by the advent of Rome, Aristaenus asks the delegates to face the reality of the situation the Achaean league found itself in, since as he states:

*Previously the Romans supported the Aetolians simply with their fleet. At that time the coastal cities of Philip' allies were in a state of terror; but the inland regions were so safe from Roman forces, that Philip plundered the Aetolians although they begged in vain for Roman aid. But now the Punic War which lasted for sixteen years in Italy is over for the Romans, and they have not merely sent assistance to the Aetolians who were fighting the war; they themselves, as leaders in the war, have attacked Macedonia by land and sea at once.<sup>100</sup>*

As Aristaenus states, by remaining allied with Macedonia, the Achaean league would be placed in an impossible position, especially since its war with Sparta was still in progress:

*The Peloponnese is a peninsula, attached to the mainland by the narrow strip of the Isthmus, open and vulnerable above everything else to attack from the sea. What if a hundred decked ships, fifty lemboi and thirty Issaeon cutters begin to plunder the coast and attack our towns which lie close to*

---

<sup>100</sup> Livy.32.21.18-20.

*coast. Yes, we could retreat to the inland cities- but they are alight with internal war, a war that rages in our heartland! When Nabis and his Spartans press on us by land and the Romans by sea, from where am I to request from Philip Macedonian reinforcements? Or shall we by ourselves with our own forces defend against the Romans the towns they will attack?*<sup>101</sup>

According to Livy the reaction of the delegates to this speech was one of uproar, and they were divided according to “peoples”, not individually.<sup>102</sup> Although the assembly voted narrowly to accept the measure, the delegates from Dyme, Argos and Megalopolis walked out to express their disapproval at the abandonment of the alliance with Macedonia. Again one can see the role that kinship links played in Greek politics, the Argives claiming that the Macedonian royal family was descended from them.<sup>103</sup> Gruen has remarked on the bitterness that the decision of the Achaean league caused; even twenty-five years afterwards

---

<sup>101</sup> Livy.32.21.26-28.

<sup>102</sup> Livy.32.22.1-2.

<sup>103</sup> See Briscoe (1973) p.211 for the kinship link. There were personal ties between Megalopolis and Macedonia, since Antigonos Doson had helped the Megalopolitans rebuild their city after its destruction in 223BC by the Spartans. The reasons for the citizens of Dyme walking out of the Achaean assembly appeared to be linked with the sacking of that *polis* during the First Macedonian War by the Roman fleet. Its inhabitants were saved from slavery by the intervention of Philip V. See Paus. 7. 17.5.



Polybius admits there was some unease about abandoning Macedonia.<sup>104</sup>

However, the elite in Arcadian communities within the Achaean league such as Megalopolis had their own political objectives in the Peloponnese. By deciding to abandon Philip V and turn to Rome, Megalopolitans like Aristaenus appear to have placed their own interests first and allied with Rome while they had the opportunity to do so. Without any real effort, Flamininus had secured the Peloponnese and neutralised Philip V's potential allies in this region. As Eckstein noted, the campaign of 198BC was a turning point in the relations between Greece and Rome since it established the Roman presence in northern and central Greece, and the Achaean league's decision to ally with Rome played an important role in cementing this.<sup>105</sup>

At the end of 198BC both the Achaean and Aetolian leagues were supporting Rome. The two had different interests in the Peloponnese, which created problems regarding the post-war settlement. One could ask why Flamininus would have allowed himself to be placed in this position. The Roman approach to the Aetolian league was understandable; the two had previously fought together against Macedonia. It is less clear why

---

<sup>104</sup> Polyb.18.6.7. Gruen (1984) p. 175. Eckstein (1995) pp.200-1 dwells on the moral reasons behind the decision.

<sup>105</sup> Eckstein (1976) p.119. Eckstein (1995) p.200 notes the parallels between this decision and the earlier one by the Achaean league to ally with Macedonia and notes Polybius' unwillingness to delve deeply into the reasons behind both these decisions.

Flaminius decided to ally with the Achaean league, especially since their sole contribution to Rome's war effort was to assist in the siege of the Acrocorinth.<sup>106</sup> Nor does it appear that the Achaean league, especially Arcadian communities within it like Megalopolis, pre-occupied as they were with the war with Nabis, presented a threat to Rome's interests, and that Flaminius was therefore forced to come to an accommodation. The Achaean league had made no effort to assist Macedonia and given its war with Nabis was unlikely to do so.<sup>107</sup> It also seems unlikely that Aristaenus would have approached Flaminius without some prior indication that his offer of alliance would be accepted.

Why then did Flaminius approach Aristaenus? There is the possibility that he was concerned that leaving the Achaean league allied with Macedonia would present a threat to the security of his army as Eckstein suggests.<sup>108</sup> However, Flaminius may have been attempting to exploit the disputes between the Achaean and Aetolian leagues in the Peloponnese for Rome's benefit. If Rome's intention was, as Polybius states, to bring the entire world under its control, the suggestion that Rome would allow states like the Aetolian and Achaean leagues to continue

---

<sup>106</sup> Aymard (1938) p.53. If the Achaean league was given control of the fortress at this point is not made clear

<sup>107</sup> Badian (1970) p.47 argues that there was no reason for Flaminius to conduct a campaign in the Peloponnese at this time.

<sup>108</sup> Eckstein (1990) p.61.



with an independent foreign policy is unrealistic. Despite this, there was still much that a state could gain by allying with Rome. The approach to the Aetolian league in 212BC indicates Roman awareness of the hostility between the Aetolian league and Macedonia, and the Aetolian desire to recover the position that they had lost to the Macedonians in the Peloponnese and Acarnania. It is not inconceivable that the Romans were also aware of the rivalries between various states in the Peloponnese. Possibly the Roman approach to, and its subsequent attitude towards the Achaean league was made in the knowledge that the Achaean league was essentially a political union in which Arcadians, in particular Megalopolitans, played an important role. In this case, it appears possible that the Roman decision to ally with the Achaean league was based on their long-term objectives, and that Flamininus was exploiting the internal differences within the Greek world in a calculated manner. Once Rome had entered the Greek world and Philip V had been defeated, the Roman alliance with the Aetolian league had served its usefulness. Thus, it was in Rome's interest to exploit Greek differences over the Peloponnese for its own benefit.

#### Nabis and the Roman/Achaean treaty.

If the Romans were exploiting internal divisions within the Greek world, who exactly was responsible for their policy, and how should actions undertaken by Flamininus in the



Peloponnese in the aftermath of the Second Macedonian War be viewed? This section will consider whether or not Flamininus' settlement was devised to take advantage of the differing interests between the Achaean and Aetolian league in the Peloponnese. The Aetolian league's subsequent decision to invite Antiochus to Greece can only be understood in the context of how Flamininus' settlement affected its interests in the Peloponnese.

I will contend that Flamininus concluded a treaty of alliance with, and then restored Argos to the Achaean league, as part of his settlement of Peloponnesian affairs, to demonstrate that in the future Rome would recognise the Achaean league's primacy in the Peloponnese. The Romans were aware from a very early stage that the Peloponnese was an important pre-occupation for the Aetolian league, having assisted the Aetolians in creating an alliance with Elis and Sparta at the beginning of the First Macedonian War. This explains the actions undertaken by Flamininus. Instead of allowing the Aetolian league to regain the position that it had in the Peloponnese prior to the Cleomenic War, Flamininus appears to have supported the Achaean league's claims to be the dominant political force in the Peloponnese, possibly calculating that this was best for Roman interests. Flamininus' campaign against Nabis was not an *ad hoc* decision because of his need to retain forces in Greece in order to prepare for the forthcoming struggle with Antiochus. Rather it

was a calculated ploy designed to provoke the Aetolian league into war. With the Roman settlement and an expansionary Achaean league threatening their allies in the Peloponnese like Elis, Messene and Sparta, the Aetolian league, already disappointed at the Roman failure to remove Philip V from the Macedonian throne, was left politically isolated, and thus appealed to Antiochus.

After Flamininus' Isthmian declaration, the most pressing problem was the position of Argos.<sup>109</sup> Argos had objected to the Achaean league's decision to ally with Rome in 198BC, allying with Philip V, who in turn gave the city to Nabis to administer.<sup>110</sup> This strengthened Nabis' position in the Peloponnese and, at the end of the war, the Achaean league, under Aristaenus' leadership started to lobby Flamininus to restore Argos to the Achaean league. Although Flamininus had, at a conference in Mycene in 197BC, confirmed Nabis' control over Argos, at this point he decided to restore Argos to the Achaean league.<sup>111</sup>

It appears unlikely that Flamininus decided to undertake this action without realising that Arcadian communities within

---

<sup>109</sup> Polyb.18.46.5-15.

<sup>110</sup> For an account of the war see Harris (1979) pp.218- 219.

<sup>111</sup> Livy.32.40.1-5. Harris (1979) p.219, argues that in view of the fact that Argos had wanted Macedonian not Spartan control, Flamininus had to restore Argos to the control of the Achaean league if he wished to have his declaration taken seriously. Errington (1969) p. 89 suggested that Flamininus might have wished to keep his forces in Greece so



the Achaean league like Megalopolis genuinely feared Sparta. One of the major themes in Aristaenus' speech urging the abandonment of the alliance with Philip V had been the fear that the Achaean league would be placed in a dangerous position by Nabis' alliance with Rome. It appears that the war with Nabis formed part of a strategy formulated by Flamininus to gain the support of an Achaean league that would be a compliant Roman subject state. By supporting the Achaean league's claims for control over Argos, Flamininus was publicly showing that Rome would support Achaean, not Aetolian interests in the Peloponnese, even though Nabis was a Roman *adscriptus* at Phoenice. Flamininus' decision to restore Argos to the control of the Achaean league was a complete reversal of previous Roman policy. Despite Polybius' representation of this campaign as a liberation of Argos from Sparta tyranny, it is evident that even he was willing to acknowledge that Flamininus' decision was a complete reversal of previous Roman policy.

The campaign itself was an easy victory for the Romans. Flamininus quickly had Nabis besieged in Sparta, and the two leaders met to discuss the dispute. The debate that took place is surprisingly seen as a victory for Nabis, in that he was seen to overcome the arguments of Flamininus concerning the

---

that he could demonstrate Roman strength to Antiochus, possibly fearing that Nabis would ally with Antiochus.



legitimacy of the Roman campaign.<sup>112</sup> Flaminius argued that the revolt that resulted in Argos leaving the Achaean league was the work of a few men and that Nabis had no popular support for his continued occupation. Nabis on the other hand pointed out that he had taken control of Argos after it had left the Achaean league and was allied to Philip V of Macedonia. Nabis also argued that Flaminius had earlier recognised his control over Argos and the Roman decision to back the Achaean league in its claims was a complete reversal in policy. After defending his actions in Argos, Nabis stated in response to Flaminius' accusation he was a tyrant that:

*As for the title (of tyrant), I can only reply that, whatever kind of a man I am, I was no different when you yourself, Titus Quinctius, made the alliance with me. At that time, as I remember, you addressed me as king; now I observe that I am called a tyrant. If I had myself altered the title of my own authority, it would be up to me to explain my inconsistency; but since it is you who are changing it, you must explain your own.*<sup>113</sup>

There is the question of whether or not Argos actually needed to be liberated. Eckstein doubts that Nabis genuinely enjoyed popular support in Argos, arguing that actions he

---

<sup>112</sup> Oliva (1971) p.291, Gruen (1984) p. 454. The speech is probably Polybian in origin, though Livy probably did make some adjustments, Briscoe (1981) p. 98.

<sup>113</sup> Livy.32.38.5-9.

undertook there such as plundering the property of its leading classes, cancelling debts and redistributing lands would have caused resentment at his rule amongst the Argives.<sup>114</sup> Given that the evidence in question comes from Polybius, one could question whether Nabis was actually so unpopular. We are informed that two thousand Argives fought for Nabis, and although they might have been hostages, the fact that they received a triumphant welcome on their return suggests that many Argives preferred Nabis' rule to membership of an Achaean league in which they had little power.<sup>115</sup>

The war with Nabis was an integral part of Rome's settlement in the Peloponnese in the aftermath of the Second Macedonian War and it is unlikely that Flamininus undertook this action without being aware of its consequences. By returning Argos to the Achaean league, Flamininus was able to deepen the Achaean league's dependence on Rome, weakening the position of the Aetolian league and its allies in the Peloponnese like Sparta and Elis in the process. Flamininus' eventual settlement in the Peloponnese appears to have been aimed at securing the loyalty of the Arcadian communities within the Achaean league for the alliance with Rome. Nabis was forced to destroy the fleet he had built, relations between Crete and Sparta were ended and some Laconian coastal communities were placed under the

---

<sup>114</sup> Eckstein (1987) p.221.

<sup>115</sup> Contra Eckstein (1987) p. 225.

control of the Achaean league.<sup>116</sup> However, Nabis was left in power in Sparta and his reforms were left untouched.<sup>117</sup> In reality Flamininus' settlement reduced Nabis' usefulness as an ally to the Aetolian league, although his continuation in power ensured that the Achaean league, especially its Megalopolitan leadership, remained dependent on Roman support. If the Aetolian league had allied with Rome on the understanding, or hope, that their interest in the Peloponnese and elsewhere would be served by the Roman settlement, Flamininus' actions proved them wrong.

### The Roman/Achaean treaty.

If Flamininus was supporting the Achaean league's interests in the Peloponnese by restoring Argos to its control, what was the basis of the relationship between the two at this point; in particular, was there a formal treaty? It has long been supposed that the Achaean league had a treaty of alliance with Rome, or as Badian argued a so-called *foedus aequum*.<sup>118</sup> The problem lies in what the treaty said and when it was concluded, since as Gruen points out, a common problem with treaties in the ancient world is that they rarely come to light except as vague generalities or isolated stipulations.<sup>119</sup> The first reference to a desire by the Achaean league for a formal alliance with Rome comes in 197BC,

---

<sup>116</sup> Livy. 34.35.3.

<sup>117</sup> Livy.34.35. 5

<sup>118</sup> Badian (1952) pp. 76-80.

<sup>119</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 14



when an embassy led by Damoxenus of Aegae requested one from the senate. This was opposed by other Greek states because of the Achaean league's outstanding territorial disputes with Elis, Messene and the Aetolian league, and the matter was referred to Flamininus and the ten commissioners.<sup>120</sup> The next definite reference to a treaty between the two comes in 183BC, when an embassy was sent to Rome to renew the alliance between Rome and the Achaean league.<sup>121</sup> It appears that a formal alliance was concluded between the Achaean league and Rome at some point between 197 and 183BC, but when exactly is unknown.

Nor is it known what the treaty stipulated. Lycortas makes reference in 184BC to the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome as one between equals; we should not necessarily assume that the Romans actually made the Achaean league their theoretical equals in a *foedus aequum*.<sup>122</sup> Lycortas' claim may be related to Polybius' theory on the role that *anacyclosis* played in influencing events and his desire to show the Achaean league and Rome acting as equals. As Gruen pointed out, the only treaty with a Greek state that could be described as a *foedus iniquum* is the Roman treaty with the

---

<sup>120</sup> Polyb.18.42.6-8.

<sup>121</sup> Polyb.23.4.12-13. For the reference to a treaty by Lycortas, Livy.39.37.9.

<sup>122</sup> This Badian's conclusion (1952) pp. 76-80.

Aetolian league in 188BC, and that in their relations with Greeks the Romans generally used Hellenic models.<sup>123</sup>

The importance of the Achaean league's treaty with Rome lies not only in the date that it was concluded, but also the motives that the Romans had for allying with the Achaean league. The first definite reference regarding the existence of a treaty between the Achaean league and Rome comes during Messene's attempt to cede from the Achaean league in 183BC, when the Achaean league asked for Roman assistance under the terms of the treaty between the two. The senate initially refused to assist, and was only after the revolt had been suppressed by Lycortas that the senate told the Achaean envoys that it had observed the terms of the treaty between the two.<sup>124</sup> Ironically, although it is assumed that the treaty between the Achaean league and Rome is the key to understanding the development of the relationship between the two, the only definite evidence for its existence comes when the senate appears to have regarded the alliance as expendable.

Is there any evidence for the earlier existence of a treaty? There is a reference in Appian, which states that after Flamininus' Isthmian proclamation, the Greeks, including the Achaean league, sent ambassadors to enrol themselves as Roman

---

<sup>123</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> See Polyb. 23.17.3-4.

allies. As Badian pointed out, this reference is meaningless.<sup>125</sup> Badian argued that since there is no reference to a treaty between the Achaean league and Rome either in the preliminaries of the war with Nabis, or its declaration of war on Antiochus, the treaty must have been concluded shortly after the Achaean declaration of war in 192BC. He contends that Rome rewarded the Achaean league with a treaty that made the two theoretical equals.<sup>126</sup>

However, in 188BC, Philopoemen entered Sparta, which by this stage was a member of the Achaean league, to restore a number of exiles.<sup>127</sup> To resolve a number of objections from the Spartans, an embassy from the Achaean league was sent to the senate led by Diophanes and Lycortas of Megalopolis, and according to Livy:

*Lycortas, on the instructions of Philopoemen, claimed that the Achaeans should be allowed to carry out what they had decreed (in Sparta) under the terms of the treaty and in accordance with their own laws, and that the Romans should grant them, unimpaired, the liberty which they themselves had guaranteed.*<sup>128</sup>

The question arises whether the treaty that Lycortas was referring to was the one between the Achaean league and Rome, or whether it was a treaty that governed the conditions by which

---

<sup>125</sup> App. Maced.9.4. See Badian (1952) p. 76.

<sup>126</sup> Badian (1952) p. 77.

<sup>127</sup> Badian (1952) p. 79.

<sup>128</sup> Livy.38.32.8.



Sparta agreed to become a member of the Achaean league? Badian dismisses this reference as inconclusive, suggesting that the treaty that Lycortas is referring to was the treaty that was concluded between Sparta and the Achaean league in 192BC.<sup>129</sup> Badian argued that the subsequent incorporation of Elis and Messene into the Achaean league demonstrates a change in Achaean attitudes towards Rome, with the Achaean league following a more independent foreign policy because it had been awarded a treaty giving it theoretical equality with Rome.<sup>130</sup> Did the Achaean league incorporate Sparta and Messene, Aetolian allies from the time of the Social War, and Elis, which claimed kinship with the Aetolians, gaining control over the Peloponnese in the process, simply because it believed itself to be Rome's theoretical equal?<sup>131</sup>

Accepting that the Romans would use a Hellenic model in their treaty with the Achaean league, obvious analogies are to be drawn with similar treaties the Romans concluded with the Maronites and Jewish kingdoms during the Hellenistic period.<sup>132</sup>

In the case of the Maronite treaty, there is a clause that bears a

---

<sup>129</sup> See Badian (1952) p 78, where he dismisses this reference as inconclusive. He admits to the possibility that the text may refer to a treaty with Rome, as indeed Holleaux (1921) pp.400-22 had earlier argued.

<sup>130</sup> Badian (1952) p.79-80.

<sup>131</sup> Badian (1952) p. 79 suggests that the Achaean league was previously promised control over Messene.

striking similarity to a possible clause in the Achaean treaty. During the war with Messene in 183BC the Achaean league requested that the senate should, in accordance with the terms of the treaty between the two, ensure that no Italian State would provide arms or food to Messene.<sup>133</sup> A similar clause is found in the Maronite treaty, stating that both sides, if at war, should ensure that they should not provide corn, arms or ships to each other's enemies, and a similar clause is found in the Jewish treaty.<sup>134</sup> This suggests that the Achaean league's treaty with Rome was similar to the one enjoyed by the Maronites and the Jews, for both of which we have the text. If this is the case, there are a number of other clauses that might be found in common with the Achaean treaty. For example, in the Maronite and Jewish treaties, neither side is to allow its territory or that of its allies to be used for an attack on the other. Clauses could only be removed or included with the agreement of both sides, and both should fight for each other if they go to war.<sup>135</sup>

Although according to the text, these treaties were to be observed for all time, there appears to have been an opt-out

---

<sup>132</sup>For the Maronite treaty see Arch.Delt.28 (1973) {1977} Chron. plate 418. For the Jewish treaty with Rome see 1.Macc.8.26.

<sup>133</sup> Polyb.23.9.12.

<sup>134</sup> 1.Macc.8.26.

<sup>135</sup> Gruen (1984) p.37 suggests that the Achaean treaty contained a clause stipulating that the Achaean assembly could not be called by a Roman without the authority of the senate.

clause, and the senate's rebuff to the Achaean league's request for aid in 183BC echoes a clause in the Maronite treaty.<sup>136</sup> Thus, in assessing what the Achaean league's treaty with Rome probably contained, the following clauses seem likely to have been included in it. The treaty was not binding, if one side did not wish to aid the other there was no obligation to do so. More importantly, the reference to the renewal of the treaty during the Achaean embassy to Rome in 183BC would seem to suggest that aid was not automatic, but had to be requested, and could be refused. Again this is a fairly standard clause in Hellenic treaties. Circa 129BC Pergamum erected an inscription celebrating the fact that "goodwill, friendship and alliance" had just been concluded with Rome. It appears that in the same year they requested that the senate adjudicate on their boundaries, and in the record we have of this, there is a reference to the fact that, "goodwill, friendship and alliance are to be renewed".<sup>137</sup> Although there is some doubt as to the date of the second inscription, if a date around 129BC is accepted, it seems unlikely a treaty that had just recently been concluded would have to be renewed. So it appears likely that the reference by Polybius of the proposed renewal of the treaty between the Achaean league and Rome in 183BC means that one side is telling the other that

---

<sup>136</sup> Polyb.23.9.12. Lines 33-36 of the Maronite treaty.

<sup>137</sup> See SIG<sup>3</sup> 694 line 10 and IGRR IV 262(copy A) line 5.



they wanted to do something in accordance with the terms of the existing treaty.

If the Achaean league's treaty with Rome was similar to the one concluded between the Romans and the Maronites and Jewish kingdoms, did the Achaean league's Megalopolitan leadership assume that just because they had this treaty, they could conduct their affairs in the Peloponnese without any reference to Rome? During the Aetolian/Syrian War Philopoemen and Diophanes of Megalopolis took control over Elis, Messene and Sparta, three states that had a long history of co-operation with the Aetolian league, with apparent Roman approval. Although the senate found some elements of the actions undertaken by Philopoemen at Sparta in 188BC objectionable, Lycortas' argument that the Achaean league had acted within the bounds of the treaty was accepted.<sup>138</sup> It is hard to avoid the conclusion that these three states were seized under the terms of a treaty of alliance that the Achaean league had concluded with Rome.

The question is when this treaty was concluded. If one returns to the first reference to the Achaean league's desire for a treaty with Rome in 197BC, the senate, because of a number of outstanding territorial disputes between Achaean league and other Greek states, postponed the decision. According to

---

<sup>138</sup> Badian (1952) p. 78. "The treaty may be one with Rome; it is perhaps more likely that it is that with Sparta and therefore irrelevant to our inquiry".

Polybius, the Eleans claimed control over Triphylia, the Messenians claimed Asine and Pylus, and the Aetolian league claimed control over Heraea. The decision regarding how these disputes should be resolved was handed over by the senate to Flamininus and the ten commissioners.<sup>139</sup> However, the absorption of Elis and Messene by the Achaean league during the Aetolian/Syrian War, along with events at Sparta in 192BC, resolved any outstanding territorial disputes that may have existed in the Peloponnese in favour of the Achaean league. If one returns to the reason why the senate did not conclude a treaty of alliance with the Achaean league in 197BC, the situation in the Peloponnese was unsettled; all the states with interests in this region were seeking to gain an advantage over each other by appealing to Rome. By returning Argos to its control in 195BC, Flamininus gave the Achaean league visible Roman support for its territorial claims in the Peloponnese. Flamininus' restoration of Argos to Achaean control indicates that he had already decided whose interests in the Peloponnese Rome should support.

It is in this context that the date of the Achaean league's treaty with Rome should be assessed. The senate referred the question of deciding the nature of the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome to Flamininus; it would appear probable that the treaty of alliance between the two was part of

---

<sup>139</sup> Polyb.18.42.6-8.

his settlement of Peloponnesian affairs in the aftermath of the Second Macedonian War. There is the question of who was responsible for defining Roman policy, Eckstein suggesting that the Romans muddled through like the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and that many of their decisions were taken on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>140</sup> Crawford, on the other hand, argues that the senate dictated Roman foreign policy, and that officials like Flamininus were instruments of senatorial policy. Although they naturally had some freedom of action, they could not deviate far from the guidelines set before they were sent to their command, since the wealth of experience accumulated by the members of the senate was an important factor in determining Roman policy.<sup>141</sup>

However, although the senate may have played the key role in defining Roman policy, a commander in the field like Flamininus would have to take decisions based on his own judgement and initiative. This does not imply that there was a confused or muddled approach in Roman policy. Flamininus was probably appointed to his command on the basis of his earlier experience of dealing with Greek states in Southern Italy; possibly he was expected to take advantage of internal differences that he felt might benefit the spread of Roman domination over the Greek world. By returning Argos to the control of the Achaean league, Flamininus was able to

---

<sup>140</sup> See Eckstein (1987) pp.268-319 for Flamininus in Greece. See p. xxii for the analogy.

<sup>141</sup> See Crawford (1978) pp. 67-73.



demonstrate to Arcadian communities like Megalopolis, some of whose inhabitants were unhappy about the abandonment of Philip V in 198BC, that the alliance with Rome would protect their interests in the Peloponnese.

In this case, it is probable that the treaty of alliance between the Achaean league and Rome was concluded shortly after the senate handed over the matter to Flamininus, before he restored Argos to Achaean control, sometime in 197/196BC. Although there is no reference to the existence of a treaty in the debate before the outbreak of war with Nabis in 195BC, Polybius, from whom presumably Livy drew his account, wished to present this war as a liberation of Argos from Spartan control. Furthermore, at this point in his narrative Polybius wished to emphasise the Achaean league's independence and the soundness of its government, to the extent that it could deal with Rome as an equal, so he could emphasise its later decline through the process of *anacyclosis*. Flamininus' support for the Achaean league, despite the fact that he earlier appears to have agreed to Nabis' continued occupation of Argos, indicates that by 195BC Flamininus had probably concluded a treaty with the Achaean league. Does it have any implications for our understanding of subsequent events, especially the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome? It is indisputable that three Megalopolitan politicians absorbed Elis, Messene and Sparta into the Achaean league during the Aetolian/Syrian War, with

Messene joining under Flamininus' direction. It appears that the treaty between the two was an attempt by Flamininus to exploit the desire by Megalopolitans like Aristaenus and Philopoemen to gain dominance over the Peloponnese.

### Conclusion.

Polybius has a Rhodian ambassador claim in 207BC that the Romans were aggressive imperialists who manipulated their allies and who would, once the Second Punic War was over, turn their attention to Greece and exploit the problems of the Aetolian league. Although possibly this was Polybian rhetoric, influenced by his knowledge of later events, the ambassador's accusations were an accurate reflection of events. Once the Second Punic War was over, Rome almost immediately turned towards Greece, using the problems of its *adscripti* from the First Macedonian War to gain a pretext for intervention.

Rome's advent in their affairs presented Greek states with the opportunity to make gains at the expense of those who were not fortunate enough to be offered the opportunity to ally with Rome. If one looks at the alliance between Rome and the Aetolian league in 212/211BC, it is usually viewed in the context of Rome needing an ally in Greece to fight against Philip V and an Aetolian desire to loot. The alliance is seen in terms of Roman desperation, the Aetolians, whom Polybius describes in the



worst of all possible fashions, are seen as the only allies that Rome could find.

That ignores the position that the Aetolian league found itself in at the end of the Social War. Having been earlier defeated by Antigonus Doson in Acarnania in 228BC, the Aetolian league had been placed in a difficult position by the Achaean league's alliance with Macedonia. Arcadian communities in the Achaean league like Megalopolis were threatening their allies in the Peloponnese; that league was itself allied to Macedonia; the Aetolians urgently needed to take action.

It is in this context that the Aetolian alliance with Rome should be seen. Contacts with Greek communities in southern Italy suggests the Aetolian league was probably aware of events there during the Second Punic War, along with the consequences for them when the war was over. Philip V of Macedonia appears to have allied with Hannibal in the belief that the Carthaginians would be victorious, and thus secure Macedonian interests in Illyria. The Aetolian league's alliance with Rome appears to have been concluded for similar reasons. Although the treaty between the two is usually seen as an agreement pertaining to the division of spoils from looting, it is evident from its provisions that the Aetolian league may have been primarily concerned with regaining territory that it had previously lost to Macedonia. Livy's reference to the restoration of Acarnania to Aetolian



control by Rome, along with the joint actions undertaken by both, indicates that the Aetolian league allied with Rome in the belief that it could use Roman support to regain the position it had lost to Macedonia in the preceding decades.

Once Rome had entered in the Greek world the situation changed. Despite the efforts of the Aetolian league to restore the alliance before the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War, the Romans entered the war without a formal alliance with it. Was this refusal to ally with the Aetolian league a response by the Romans to the separate peace that they had made with Macedonia in 206BC? Or does it indicate the path that Roman policy would follow once the Second Punic war was over? The Romans arrived in Greece with the intention of imposing their control. Thus the senate's refusal to renew their alliance with the Aetolian league prior to the Second Macedonian War may have been based on a realisation that this alliance had served its usefulness. The Romans had assisted the Aetolian league during the First Macedonian War to use its links with Elis and alliance with Sparta against the Macedonian presence in the Peloponnese. So when they intervened in Greek affairs during the Second Macedonian War, they were undoubtedly aware of the rival states that were contending for control over the Peloponnese. Flamininus' actions, both in seeking an alliance with the Achaean league, and later in restoring Argos to its control, appears to have been an attempt to exploit the situation

for Rome's benefit. Polybius presents the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome at this stage as one between equals. The fact that the Achaean league expanded to encompass the entire Peloponnese during the Aetolian/Syrian War would seem to indicate that Polybius' fellow Megalopolitans benefited from the situation brought about by Rome's advent in Hellenic affairs.

## Chapter Six.

### The fruits of co-operation

#### Introduction

Just before the evacuation of Roman forces from Greece, Flamininus called a conference at Corinth.<sup>1</sup> In his speech he addressed the concerns of the Aetolian and Achaean leagues about the situation in the Peloponnese after the war with Nabis, and then turned towards the evacuation of Roman forces from Greece. He announced that Roman garrisons would be removed from the three fetters of Greece, and that all Roman troops would withdraw to Italy. According to Livy, Flamininus' reasoning was simple. As he stated:

*He did this so that all men might know whether lying was a Roman habit, or a speciality of the Aetolians, who had spread the fear that the cause of liberty had been wrongly entrusted to the Roman people and that the Greeks had merely exchanged Macedonian masters for Roman lords.<sup>2</sup>*

Polybius presents Roman actions at this stage of their involvement in Greek affairs, especially Flamininus' behaviour, in almost ideal terms. Having liberated Greece from a tyrant like Philip V, Rome refused to take advantage of its victory, deciding instead to withdraw, leaving the Greeks free. It cannot be

---

<sup>1</sup> Livy. 34.48-49. See also Larsen (1968) p. 404 and Gruen (1984) p. 455.

<sup>2</sup> Livy. 34.49.5-6; Polyb.18.45.6. for a similar charge from the Aetolians about Roman duplicity.



doubted that the Romans did withdraw their legions to Italy shortly after this conference, and that a claim to have brought freedom to the Greeks from Macedonian tyranny was a major theme in Roman propaganda in the aftermath of the Second Macedonian War.<sup>3</sup> It is also evident that as the Romans were withdrawing, the Aetolian league was openly stating that Rome was a threat to Greek freedom and had betrayed its promises. Nor was this a recent accusation. Before the war against Nabis, Polybius has an Aetolian called Alexander make a number of accusations about broken Roman promises regarding their declaration of freedom, stating that:

*His final charge was that they were making Argos and Nabis an excuse for staying in Greece and keeping their army in the country. Let them, he said, transport their legions to Italy; and he stated that the Aetolians promised that either Nabis would withdraw his garrison from Argos voluntarily, on terms, or they would compel him by force of arms to submit to the power of a united Greece.*<sup>4</sup>

In reply, Aristaenus, the *strategos* of the Achaean league, argued that Flamininus should pay no attention to Alexander's offer. Rather he should instead:

---

<sup>3</sup> For the assertion that Polybius suspended his otherwise negative depiction of Aetolian behaviour during this period, see Sacks (1975) pp. 92-107, a position disputed by Mendels (1984-86) pp.63-73.

<sup>4</sup> Livy. 34.23.9-11.

*Forbid that city (Argos) to be a prize to be contended for by a Spartan tyrant and Aetolian pirates, in such a plight that its recovery by you would bring greater misery than its capture by him (Nabis). The sea between us does not protect us from those brigands, Titus Quinctius; and what will our future be if they establish their citadel in the heart of the Peloponnese?* <sup>5</sup>

Livy, presumably drawing on Polybius, seems to be drawing attention to the differing interests between the Aetolian and Achaean leagues over the Peloponnese. Alexander's offer to have Nabis withdraw from Argos implies that the Aetolian league was concerned about the influence on their Peloponnesian interests were Rome to restore Argos to the Achaean league. Aristaenus' reply shows that he was concerned with the possibility of the Aetolian league retaining its position in the Peloponnese, and sought Roman support to see that it was removed.

Polybius' presentation of Roman behaviour and its dealings with the Achaean league in the aftermath of the Second Macedonian War is conditioned by his belief in the role that *anacyclosis* played in allowing the Romans to achieve their conquest. Polybius' intention in writing *pragmatikê historia* was to instruct his Greek readership in a two-fold fashion. Firstly, as to how the suspension of *anacyclosis* over a prolonged period led to the circumstances arising in the Roman republic's system of

---

<sup>5</sup> Livy. 34.24. 1-3.

government that resulted in almost an ideal state emerging, producing highly principled leaders like Flamininus.

Polybius' second purpose was to demonstrate to his Greek leadership the changes that had taken place in their own society that had allowed them to be conquered; the internal corruption that had taken place in the Achaean league through the workings of *anacyclosis* in its system of government. To do this Polybius had to present the Achaean league as a single democratic *polis*, which could initially deal with Rome as an equal. In this situation, the Aetolian league's interests in the Peloponnese, no matter how legitimate, were contrary to those of the Achaean *ethnos*.

It is in this context that Flamininus' decision to restore Argos to the control of the Achaean league prior to his evacuation of Greece should be seen; it posed a significant challenge to the Aetolian league's interests in the Peloponnese. Derow has drawn attention to the unspecified promises that appear to have been made to the Aetolian league prior to their alliance with Rome during the Second Macedonian War, and how they appear not to have been fulfilled in Flamininus' settlement of Greek affairs.<sup>6</sup> As Polybius has Dicaearchus, the Aetolian envoy sent to Antiochus to gain his participation in the Aetolian/Syrian War, state:

*He began by saying that the booty taken from Philip had gone to the Romans; but the victory belonged to the Aetolians; it was the Aetolians and no one else who had*

---

<sup>6</sup> Derow (1979) p. 8.



*given the Romans a foothold in Greece, and they had provided them with the resources for victory.<sup>7</sup>*

Polybius, from whom these speeches probably derived, acknowledges that the leadership of the Aetolian league seems to have genuinely felt that their interests in the Peloponnese had been betrayed by Flamininus' decision to support the Achaean league over Argos.

Was Flamininus supporting the Achaean league, or simply the interests of one region within it? Apart from its expansion into Arcadia in the 230s BC, the next large-scale expansion of the Achaean league came during the Aetolian/Syrian War, when Elis, Messene and Sparta, all of who were long-standing allies of the Aetolian league and traditional rivals of Arcadia, were incorporated into the Achaean league. This expansion was carried out under the leadership of three Megalopolitans: Aristaenus, who initially argued that the Achaean league should ally with Rome, Diophanes and Philopoemen. At least one of these annexations was carried out under Flamininus' direction.

Again, it must be remembered that as a source of evidence, Polybius' narrative represents just one opinion from the many states that came into contact with the Romans. We should, as so often before, question Polybius' assertions regarding their role in these events. More importantly, we should also challenge his depiction of the actions of political leaders from elsewhere in the

---

<sup>7</sup> Livy.35.12.15

Peloponnese. Callicrates, because of his actions in 180BC during an embassy to Rome to try and resolve the question of the Spartan exiles, has been seen as a pro-Roman politician. Should his actions be viewed solely in this context? *Poleis* like Leontium, who founded the original Achaean league, appear to have lost much of their power to Arcadian states like Megalopolis after the decision to ally with Macedonia during the Cleomenic War. As for Polybius' presentation of Callicrates' actions, this embassy is marked as the decisive turning point in the relationship between Rome and Greece, though it is apparant that little change actually occurred. Polybius depicts Callicrates' embassy in the manner that he does to demonstrate to his readers the point where the Achaean league began its degeneration though the natural process of *anacyclosis* from a democracy that initially dealt with Rome on equal terms into eventual mob-rule and anarchy. It is in this context that Polybius' presentation of the events surrounding the Aetolian/Syrian War has to be seen.

This chapter will examine the situation in the Peloponnese from the beginning of the Aetolian/Syrian War until the embassy of Callicrates and the resolution of the Spartan exile question in 180BC. I will contend that Aristaenus and Philopoemen co-operated with the Romans to foil Aetolian plans at Sparta prior to the outbreak of the Aetolian/Syrian War, because it was in their interest to remove the threat that they faced from the Aetolian league and its allies in the Peloponnese. Though Megalopolitans



like Philopoemen and Aristaenus might not have wished to see Rome emerge as the dominant power in the Greek world, they placed their own interests first.

Once the Aetolian league had been defeated by the Romans, and the Achaean league was under the control of politicians from Megalopolis, under the guidance of Philopoemen, the Achaean league started to follow a more independent foreign policy, renewing its diplomatic links with the Hellenistic monarchies. I will argue that the Romans viewed this action as a threat to their position in the Greek world, and exploited the question of the Spartan exiles to undermine the position of the Megalopolitans within the Achaean league. This resulted in the emergence of Callicrates, who used this opportunity to break the dominant position that Megalopolis exercised over the Achaean league.

### The Aetolian/Syrian War and Philopoemen's entry into Sparta.

Turning to the outbreak of the war itself, the first action undertaken by the Aetolians was an appeal to Philip V, Antiochus and Nabis sometime in 193BC.<sup>8</sup> Although these missions found a mixed response, the embassy dispatched to Sparta was

---

<sup>8</sup> See Livy.35.12.4-5 for the assembly that decided on the dispatch of these embassies. Deininger (1971) p.73 argues that the Aetolian league was trying to use the differences within these states between pro and anti-Roman factions. It appears that ambassadors from Antiochus to Rome may have conferred with Aetolians on their return journey, since one of them, Hegesianax, was made an Aetolian *proxenos* in 193BC. See SIG<sup>3</sup> 585. Line 43 and Walbank (1940) p. 192 for the chronology.



immediately successful. According to Livy, the Aetolian envoy pointed out in a long speech how Sparta's position in the Peloponnese had been weakened by Flaminius' settlement. The result was that Nabis:

*Confined within his own walls, (Nabis) now saw the Achaeans lording it over the Peloponnese; he would never have another chance of receiving what was his if he let slip this opportunity...all this was said to arouse the tyrant's spirit, so that when Antiochus invaded Greece, the consciousness that the treaty of friendship with Rome had been violated by wrongs done to their allies might unite Nabis with Antiochus.*<sup>9</sup>

Local interests appear to have been the decisive consideration in determining Hellenic actions, and indicate that Flaminius had placed the Achaean league in a dominant position in the Peloponnese after the Second Macedonian War. On receiving information that the Aetolian league was willing to act against Rome, according to Livy, Nabis immediately attempted to reverse Flaminius' settlement by attacking the coastal communities awarded to the Achaean league.<sup>10</sup> Again one can see

---

<sup>9</sup> Livy.35.12. 7-9.

<sup>10</sup> Livy.35.13.1-2. "Nevertheless the kings either made no move, or moved too slowly. Nabis at once sent agents round all the coastal settlements to stir up civil disorders in them, he brought some of the leading citizens to his side by gifts, while murdering others who were obstinate in their attachment to the Roman alliance. Titus Quinctius

the situation in the Peloponnese being exploited by the Aetolian league. By encouraging Nabis to attack, the Aetolians appear to have been trying to re-establish the alliance that had existed between it and forces in the Peloponnese from the time of the Social War onwards.

The Achaean league under Philopoemen reacted by establishing a garrison at Gythium, and an embassy was sent to Rome to seek assistance.<sup>11</sup> In reply, on their way to Antiochus, an embassy under Flamininus stopped to assist the Achaean league, and the Romans dispatched a fleet of ships to aid them. However, although Nabis was attacking the Achaean garrison in Gythium, Philopoemen made no response until the return of the Achaean embassy from Rome.<sup>12</sup> When it returned, a further embassy was sent to Flamininus to seek his advice, which was to wait until the

---

had charged the Achaeans with the responsibility for safeguarding all the Laconian coastal districts.”

<sup>11</sup> Livy. 35.13.3. Philopoemen had returned from Crete in 194BC, and given his earlier association with Macedonia, there appears to have been some difficulties connected with his re-entry into Achaean politics, which were resolved when Philopoemen supported a number of small Arcadian communities who wished to leave Megalopolis. See Plut. *Philop.* 13.5. Errington (1969) p. 90 suggests that this event should be dated to Philopoemen's return to Crete and that Aristaenus opposed his return over his supposed desertion in 200BC.

<sup>12</sup> Livy.35.25.3-4.



arrival of the Roman fleet.<sup>13</sup> Before this reply was relayed, the Achaean league declared war against Nabis.<sup>14</sup>

On his arrival Flamininus imposed a truce between the combatants.<sup>15</sup> Philopoemen's role in resisting Nabis and appealing to Rome suggests that he was willing to co-operate with the Romans as long as it was in his political interests. The possibility of the Aetolian league regaining its political influence in the Peloponnese, to the detriment of Megalopolitan interests, provides a possible explanation for the subsequent actions undertaken by Philopoemen at Sparta.

### Nabis' Assassination.

This section will focus on the reaction of the Achaean league, and Megalopolitans in particular, to events at the outbreak of war between Rome and Antiochus in 192BC. It will examine the actions of Philopoemen and other Megalopolitans in bringing initially Sparta, and subsequently, Elis and Messene, into the Achaean league. It will consider whether Philopoemen's actions

---

<sup>13</sup> Flamininus' advice for the Achaean league to wait for the Roman fleet was sound, since the Achaean flagship fell to pieces when it attacked Gythium. Plut.*Philop.*14.3

<sup>14</sup> Livy.35.25.12.

<sup>15</sup> For Flamininus' intervention, which is not mentioned by Livy, see Plut.*Philop.*15, and Paus. 8.50.6-10, which does not mention Flamininus by name. These events appear to have occurred before the *panaitolika*, the regular Spring meeting of the Aetolian league, before the opening of the campaigning season of the year, so in other words before the Aetolians declared war against Rome. Larsen (1968) p. 411.



along with those of other Megalopolitans should be seen as evidence that that they were acting in collaboration with Rome, and whether Polybius' regional perspective and stress on Achaean unity in his histories mask the situation in the Peloponnese.

Turning to the outbreak of the war, the decisive stage of the conflict happened before the arrival of the Roman army in Greece.<sup>16</sup> Philopoemen's actions at Sparta played an important role in hindering the Aetolian league's plan to secure a number of important strategic locations in Greece prior to Antiochus' arrival from Syria. The Aetolian failure to secure Sparta gave the Romans the ability to react before Antiochus had moved only a small part of his force to Greece. Therefore, Polybius' account of these events, transmitted through Livy, needs to be carefully considered.

According to Livy's account, after the Aetolian assembly voted to invite Antiochus to Greece to arbitrate between it and Rome in 192BC, the *apokletoi* took over, and it was they who decided on the course of action, suggesting that the move towards war was carefully planned. Missions were sent to Demetrias, Chalcis and Sparta.<sup>17</sup> The Aetolians managed to secure Demetrias, though their efforts at Chalcis were unsuccessful.<sup>18</sup> It was the

---

<sup>16</sup> A point made by Larsen (1968) p. 414.

<sup>17</sup> Livy.35.34-38.

<sup>18</sup> See Livy. 35. 34.5-12. for Demetrias. Livy 35.38.1-14. for Chalcis.

attempt to capture Sparta that was decisive, and the actions undertaken there by Philopoemen may be the key to understanding Polybius' depiction of this conflict.

According to Livy, Alexamenus, a former Aetolian *strategos*, was sent to Sparta with a force of a thousand infantrymen and thirty picked cavalrymen, along with secret instructions to kill Nabis and bring Sparta into an alliance with the Aetolian league.<sup>19</sup> According to Livy, the reasons for carrying out this plan were that:

*Nabis had been deprived of the coastal towns by the Romans, and then actually confined by the Achaeans within the walls of Sparta, and anyone who took the initiative in killing him would, it was supposed, win from the Spartans the gratitude for the whole operation. The Aetolians had a reason for sending men to him in the fact that he had been asking them desperately to send him reinforcements since they had instigated him to rebel.*<sup>20</sup>

On his arrival, Alexamenus informed Nabis that Antiochus had already arrived in Greece, and that their united forces would be enough to defeat the Romans. In order to demonstrate the potential power of the Aetolian league, Alexamenus proposed to Nabis that he should personally review the Aetolian force. When Nabis accepted this offer, accompanied only by a few

---

<sup>19</sup> Livy.35.35.6f.

<sup>20</sup> See Livy. 35.35.1-3.

bodyguards, Alexamenus ordered the Aetolian cavalry to kill him.<sup>21</sup>

According to Livy, after Nabis had been killed, Alexamenus galloped off to seize his palace, and an assembly was called at which he delivered a speech regarding the situation. However, as Livy states:

*But, as was fitting in a plan embarked upon with treachery, everything conspired to hasten the downfall of the perpetrators of the crime. The leader shut himself up in the palace and spent a day and a night examining the tyrant's treasury; the Aetolians, who wished to appear as the liberators of the city, acted as if they had captured it, and turned to plundering it.*<sup>22</sup>

According to Livy, as Alexamenus was gloating over Nabis' treasure, the Spartans, after their initial shock, turned on the Aetolians, killing most of them. According to Livy, after the Aetolian force had been killed or fled, the forces of the Achaean league intervened, since:

*Philopoemen had set out for Sparta on hearing of the tyrant's murder. Finding there a scene of terror and confusion, he summoned the chief citizens and, after delivering the sort of speech that Alexamenus should have made, he attached the Spartans to the Achaean alliance. He*

---

<sup>21</sup> Livy.35.35.8-19.

<sup>22</sup> Livy.35.36.5-6.



*did this easily because Aulus Atilius happened at this time to have reached Gythium with twenty-four ships.*<sup>23</sup>

Plutarch gives a rather similar account, stating that:

*Philopoemen, seizing his opportunity, fell upon the city with an armed force, and partly by compulsion, partly by persuasion, brought it over to his purposes and made it a member of the Achaean league.*<sup>24</sup>

The literary evidence tells us little about what actually happened. In particular, why did the Aetolians assassinate Nabis, one of their long-standing allies in the Peloponnese, and the only monarch of the three approached in 194BC who supported the Aetolian plot to act against Rome? Sparta had been an ally of the Aetolian league since the beginning of the Social War, and Nabis was mentioned in the Peace of Phoenice as a Roman *adscriptus*, along with other allies of the Aetolian league. The Aetolian league had also attempted to prevent Flamininus' removal of Nabis from Argos in 195BC. When one considers the result, Sparta's absorption into an Achaean league that supported Rome during the war, Alexamenus' decision not to consolidate the Aetolian position in Sparta, instead gloating over Nabis' treasury like a greedy child, appears as an act of crass stupidity.

---

<sup>23</sup> Livy.35.37.1-3.

<sup>24</sup> Plut.*Philop.*15.2-3. Plutarch makes no mention of the role that the Roman fleet played in persuading the Spartans to join the Achaean league.

Cartledge suggests that the Aetolians decided to murder Nabis because he had become an unreliable ally, describing them as “faithless”, a comment that echoes Larsen’s earlier comment that the Alexamenus’ murder of Nabis was “treacherous”.<sup>25</sup> There is naturally the possibility that Alexamenus murdered Nabis for financial reasons, and that the failure to capture Sparta was due to his greed. Yet, Alexamenus had been dispatched to Sparta with instructions from the Aetolian *apokletoi*. His mission was part of a deliberate plan decided in advance by the governing body of the Aetolian league. Is it conceivable that Alexamenus decided, for some inexplicable reason, to murder an important ally of the Aetolian league, purely to gloat over his treasury?

Before the arrival of the Aetolian force, it appears that the Achaean army under Philopoemen was active in the area surrounding Sparta, and that a border war was in progress, probably connected to Nabis’ attacks on the Laconian coastal communities placed under the Achaean league’s control by Flamininus. Philopoemen’s swiftness suggests that he was close by with a substantial force. Possibly Philopoemen’s reaction to the events in Sparta was not, as the sources would have it, a reaction to the unscrupulous actions of the Aetolian league, but may have been an attempt by Megalopolitans within the Achaean league to take advantage of the situation by seizing control over Sparta. If one considers the settlement imposed there in 192BC, it would

---

<sup>25</sup> Cartledge (1989) p. 77 and Larsen (1968) p. 413.



appear that Philopoemen was concerned with gaining the support of certain members of the Spartan elite. According to Plutarch, Philopoemen was successful because:

*He carried with him the best men amongst the Spartans, who hoped to have in him a guardian of their liberties.*<sup>26</sup>

The identity of Philopoemen's supporters in Sparta has divided modern scholars.<sup>27</sup> In assessing Philopoemen's settlement at Sparta a number of points must be borne in mind. Firstly, there was no restoration of exiles in 192BC, nor were the new citizens created by Nabis expelled. This suggests that the liberties that the Spartans wished to preserve were those granted to them by Nabis.<sup>28</sup> Shimron suggests that the embassy sent to Rome in 191BC asking for the restoration of the coastal communities and the hostages taken in 195BC was in fact from the Spartan government.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Plut.*Philop.*15.3-4. Shimron (1972) p.102 suggests that Nabis' supporters were left in control of Sparta, since he argues that Plutarch is referring to the "principal" men in Sparta, Shimron translating *aristoi* as principal. However this is in order to reinforce his own argument. Cartledge (1989) p.78 opts for best.

<sup>27</sup> Plut.*Philop.*15.4-6 Errington (1969) pp.110-112 argues that they were members of the Spartan elite who had remained under Nabis' regime, but who did not support his policies. He argues that Philopoemen was engaged in a client-patron relationship with his old guest friend Timolaus, who accepted membership of the Achaean league.

<sup>28</sup> Plut.*Philop.*16.4-5.

<sup>29</sup> See Polyb.21.1. This view is opposed by Errington, who argues that there was a change in government in Sparta, a view supported by Walbank (1979) p.88.



What happened in Sparta in 192BC is puzzling. If one accepts Livy's account, before the Aetolian league invited Antiochus to Greece they first murdered one of their most important allies in the Peloponnese for unspecified and irrational reasons. Then, Philopoemen brought Sparta within the Achaean league, but failed to make any change to the Spartan system of government, apparently leaving Nabis' reforms intact.<sup>30</sup>

It is unquestionable that Alexamenus was responsible for Nabis' assassination. This does not mean that Livy's account, following Polybius' depiction of these events, is sympathetic to the motives that prompted this action. Nabis was involved with a war with the Achaean league, and his primary concern was to recover the coastal communities Flamininus had given to the Achaean league to administer. Nabis may have believed that the Aetolian plot was a gamble doomed to failure, and calculated that Spartan interests were best served by refusing to co-operate.<sup>31</sup>

Though Livy, following Polybius, asserted that Nabis attacked

---

<sup>30</sup> Grainger (1999) p. 440-41 suggests that Alexamenus' failure to take control of Sparta was because of a pre-arranged plan between the Aetolian league and Philopoemen. He argues that the Aetolians were undoubtedly aware of the ambitions of the leadership of the Achaean league to unite the entire Peloponnese. Grainger suggests that the Aetolians murdered Nabis with the intention of creating the conditions that would allow Philopoemen to intervene and install a pro-Achaean government in Sparta before the Romans could intervene. Grainger does not specify why the Aetolian league would have wanted Philopoemen to take control over Sparta.

<sup>31</sup> See Polyb.21.3.4. for the earlier decision by the Romans to release Spartan hostages, but to retain Armenas, Nabis' son, who died shortly afterwards. Walbank (1979) p.91.

these communities on the instigation of the Aetolian league in 194BC, this assault may in reality have had more to do with local rivalries than any grandiose plot against Rome.

The depiction of how Nabis was killed and of Alexamenus' subsequent actions follows in the Polybian tradition of representing the Aetolians as acting in an irrational manner in the Peloponnese. If Alexamenus was acting in accordance with a pre-arranged Aetolian plan to seize control of strategically important locations at the advent of a war that was itself a highly risky venture, he may have had no other choice if Nabis refused to co-operate. However, the Aetolian failure to consolidate control over Sparta was probably related more to Philopoemen's sudden intervention than Alexamenus' greed.

The problem with most discussions of these events is that they focus solely on Sparta, without considering the role that Sparta and the Peloponnese played in the Aetolian league's strategic thinking, along with the consequences of Nabis' assassination.<sup>32</sup> The Aetolian failure to secure control over Sparta did hinder Antiochus' movements on his arrival in Greece. Soon afterwards Antiochus arrived with an army of approximately ten thousand men and occupied Demetrias, which the Aetolians had

---

<sup>32</sup> There has been a move away from accepting the Polybian narrative in recent years, most notably by Cartledge (1989) pp.67-70. Accepting that there were revolutionary aspects of Nabis' regime, Cartledge places them in a wider context, arguing that Nabis had more in common with a Hellenistic tyrant than a traditional Spartan king did.

successfully secured.<sup>33</sup> This force was inadequate, since Antiochus needed to use it to provide garrisons around Greece, whilst at the same time retain a force adequate for battle.<sup>34</sup> Acting under the belief that Sparta and the other two locations would be secured by the Aetolian league, Antiochus had hastened to Greece with a force inadequate for both tasks. The failure to secure Sparta forced Antiochus to divert a thousand troops to Elis to defend Aetolia's Peloponnesian allies, weakening the force that he hoped to confront Rome with.<sup>35</sup>

If the Achaean league was supporting Rome in its conflict with Antiochus, what did Megalopolitans such as Philopoemen gain in return? Although Philopoemen's seizure of Sparta was a reaction to events there, it is evident that not only did Philopoemen gain control over Sparta in 192BC, but that other Aetolian allies in the Peloponnese, such as Messene and Elis, were later absorbed into the Achaean league under Flamininus' direction.

Again the problem is to assess how far the Romans knew about and exploited regional differences within the Greek world. After Flamininus' settlement in the Peloponnese had been so detrimental to the interests of the Aetolian league, the Aetolian decision to approach Antiochus was an attempt to try and reverse

---

<sup>33</sup> Livy.35.43.4-5.

<sup>34</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 415-416.

<sup>35</sup> See Livy.35.43.6. and 36.5.2-3. Larsen (1968) p.416. They were probably also meant to protect Messene.



this settlement. As such, it was in the interest of Megalopolitans like Philopoemen to co-operate with Rome in order to secure their own position in the Peloponnese.

Philopoemen's intervention at Sparta favoured Roman interests; despite this, his stated policy towards Sparta during the war was that:

*Since king Antiochus and the Romans were hovering about in Greece with armies so great, it behoved the strategos of the league to pay attention to them, and not to stir up domestic troubles.*<sup>36</sup>

Sometime in 191BC, Plutarch informs us that there were problems in Sparta, and in response the Achaean *strategos*, Diophanes of Megalopolis, marched on Sparta with Flamininus to restore order. Before they could intervene, Philopoemen went to Sparta in a private capacity, and:

*Put an end to the disorders in the polis, and brought the Lacedaemonians back into the league as they were from the outset.*<sup>37</sup>

Once the Aetolian/Syrian War was over, in 188BC, Philopoemen's reaction was very different. The cause of trouble was the congregation of a number of Spartan exiles at Las, one of the coastal communities over which the Achaean league had been given protective status in 195BC. The Spartan government

---

<sup>36</sup> Plut.*Philop.*16.1.

<sup>37</sup> Plut.*Philop.*16.2. Aymard (1938) p. 337.

attacked the exiles, who in response appealed to the Achaean league for assistance.<sup>38</sup>

According to the sources, Philopoemen insisted that those responsible be handed over for trial. The Spartans refused, instead killing thirty pro-Achaean politicians, and appealed to the Roman consul at Cephallonia, who suggested that all involved send embassies to Rome.<sup>39</sup> Diophanes and Lycortas, both Megalopolitans, were sent to represent the Achaean league. Diophanes suggested that the matter should be left to the senate to settle. Lycortas argued that the matter be left to the Achaean league, which would deal with this problem under the terms of the treaty.<sup>40</sup> According to Livy the senate's reply was:

*So obscurely worded that while the Achaeans took it as a concession of their claims in relation to Sparta, the Spartans interpreted it as not giving the Achaeans all that they had demanded.*<sup>41</sup>

Why did the Romans give such an ambiguous answer that made both sides believe that they were in the right?<sup>42</sup> Encouraged by the Roman response, Philopoemen led the Achaean army to

---

<sup>38</sup> See Livy.38.31.6-7.

<sup>39</sup> Livy.38.31.5-6. Between their appeal and the sending of the embassy it appears that the Achaean league declared war on Sparta, though because of the onset of winter there was little fighting.

<sup>40</sup> Errington (1969) p. 137.

<sup>41</sup> Livy.38.32.10.

<sup>42</sup> Errington (1969) pp. 143-4 suggests that the senate wished not to get involved.

Sparta, accompanied by the exiles, and a conference was arranged at a place called Compasion.<sup>43</sup> An affray broke out and seventeen Spartans were killed. A further sixty-three were executed the following day after a brief trial that resembled a lynching. Philopoemen entered Sparta and imposed a settlement designed to humiliate. The walls that Nabis built were pulled down. All the slaves and foreign mercenaries that had been enfranchised were expelled, and the constitution and system of education of the mythical Lycurgus, (or those parts of it that Nabis had found it expedient to restore), were replaced by the Achaean model. Those who refused to accept these measures were rounded up and sold into slavery, the money raised being used to repair the portico in Megalopolis that had been damaged by Cleomenes' forces. Sparta was also forced to give Belbinatis to Megalopolis.<sup>44</sup>

As Cartledge points out, the events of 192BC must have come as a shock and a humiliation to the Spartans with their long history, and in reality marked the end of Sparta's independence.<sup>45</sup> Philopoemen's brutality four years after he had brought Sparta within the Achaean league shows signs of his Megalopolitan background.<sup>46</sup> Sparta's subjection was not solely to the Achaean league, but specifically to Megalopolis.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Livy.38.33.6-11.

<sup>44</sup> For Philopoemen's settlement see Livy.38.34.1-9.

<sup>45</sup> Cartledge (1989) p. 77-8.

<sup>46</sup> Errington (1969) p. 147. As Errington argues, many, if not all of the actions Philopoemen undertook show signs of him wishing to demonstrate Sparta's subjection



The key point in assessing these events is the ambiguous reply from the senate regarding what should be done about the Spartan attack on the exiles at Las. If Livy is to be believed, the problem was that both sides seem to have regarded it as giving them what they wanted, but unfortunately that is all we are told. Again one must remember that all the Achaean officials involved in this affair, such as Philopoemen and Diophanes, were Megalopolitans intent on humiliating Sparta. As Polybius, in a fragment of his otherwise lost account states:

*It was a good act to restore to their country the Spartan exiles...and it was an advantageous one to humble Sparta.*<sup>48</sup>

It is evident that Megalopolitans like Philopoemen considered that the senate's reply gave them total authority to do what they liked in Sparta. It is arguable whether this was what the senate intended. When in the following year the Spartans complained to the senate about the actions undertaken by Philopoemen, we are told that:

---

to Megalopolis. Plutarch mentions that a Spartan source records a death toll of three hundred and fifty. Plut. *Philop* 16.4.

<sup>47</sup> It might be simply coincidence, but in 188BC, the Achaean league changed its assembly's location from Aegium to a system where the assembly met in different *poleis* within the Achaean league in rotation (Livy.38.30.1-6). See Badian and Errington (1965) p.13-17.

<sup>48</sup> Polyb.21.32C.

*They finally procured a letter from Marcus Lepidus....  
consul at that time, in which he wrote to the Achaeans  
saying that they had not acted rightly in Sparta.*<sup>49</sup>

Philopoemen sent an embassy in response, and when it returned in 185BC, it reported that:

*They (the senate) were displeased at the destruction of the  
wall at Sparta and at the...of those executed at Compasion,  
but that they did not revoke their previous decision.*<sup>50</sup>

Although the Romans were displeased with the actions undertaken by Philopoemen in 188BC, they did not object to Sparta's membership of the Achaean league. Their sole concern was the brutal manner in which Megalopolitans like Philopoemen acted at Sparta.

Nor was Sparta the only state in the Peloponnese that came under the control of the Achaean league during the Aetolian/Syrian War. At the same time that he tried to invade Sparta in 191BC, according to Livy, Diophanes also attempted to invade Messene and Elis. Flamininus, after an appeal from Deinocrates, which stated that the Messenians were willing to

---

<sup>49</sup> Polyb.22.3.1-2.

<sup>50</sup> Polyb.22.7.5-7. Diodorus has a different account where Roman envoys report the displeasure of the senate and states that it was displeased at the construction of the walls. Diod.29.17. Walbank argues that Diodorus made a mistake and that the senate's displeasure at the completion of the walls should refer to their destruction. He suggests that the lacuna in the Polybian text referred to the senate's displeasure at the abolition of the Spartan constitution. Walbank (1979) p.188.

surrender to Rome but not to the Achaean league, prevented the invasion. According to Livy, Flamininus set himself up as a neutral arbitrator, and made Messene recall its exiles and join the Achaean league.<sup>51</sup> Elis also appears to have become a member at this point, resulting in the Achaean league dominating the Peloponnese.<sup>52</sup>

All three states had co-operated with the Aetolian league during the Social and First Macedonian Wars, with both Elis and Messene subsequently fighting against Rome with the Aetolians, and had long resisted absorption into the Achaean league. Does Flamininus' decision to make them part of the Achaean league show his ignorance of the situation in the Peloponnese? Or rather was he rewarding the close co-operation received from Megalopolitans like Philopoemen? If one returns to the situation before the war, Aristaenus' reaction to the Aetolian league's offer to persuade Nabis to evacuate Sparta was to express the fear that such a move would result in the Aetolian league retaining its position in the Peloponnese. Nabis' death and Philopoemen's seizure of Sparta was a major blow to the plot that the Aetolian league had hatched. Although Philopoemen's actions in 192BC

---

<sup>51</sup> Livy.36.31.6-9. See Aymard (1938) pp.343-345, Gruen (1984) p.468-70 for these events. According to Errington (1969) pp.125-6. Deinocrates was a client of Flamininus.

<sup>52</sup> The Achaeans also tried to gain control over the island of Zacynthos, but were prevented from doing so by Flamininus, see Paus.8.30.5. Elis was certainly a member of the Achaean league by 189BC according to Livy.38.32.3.



were probably not preconceived, they undoubtedly did assist Rome.

The key-figure surrounding these events is Flamininus, who had been instrumental in the conduct of the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome since 198BC. His actions in the Peloponnese in the aftermath of the Second Macedonian War, especially his decision to remove Nabis from Argos, seem to suggest that he favoured Achaean, in particular, Megalopolitan, primacy in the Peloponnese. When Nabis had attacked the coastal communities placed under the control of the Achaean league, Flamininus had intervened to support Philopoemen, and later presented Messene and possibly Elis to the Achaean league. These actions would seem to suggest that he was rewarding Megalopolitan assistance with control over the Aetolian league's allies in the Peloponnese.

This co-operation does not mean that politicians in the Achaean league like Aristaenus and Philopoemen were pro-Roman. Again, one must remember how the Romans, to further their imperial ambitions during the First Macedonian War, exploited the position that the Aetolian league found itself in. Flamininus' role in developing the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome, indicates that his decision to support the primacy of the Megalopolitans within the Achaean league was based on his awareness of the situation in the Peloponnese, exploiting tensions between Greek states to further Rome's

control. Although the advent of Rome in the Greek world was undoubtedly viewed with apprehension by many Greek states, it also gave them the opportunity, if they co-operated with Rome, to further their local ambitions. As Philopoemen's actions show, by assisting Rome he was able to humiliate the Spartans and avenge all the perceived wrongs suffered by Megalopolis at Spartan hands since 370BC.

### Rome, the Achaean league and the question of the Spartan exiles.

If Megalopolitan politicians benefited through their co-operation with Rome during the Aetolian/Syrian War, this raises questions about how closely the Romans exercised their control over the Greek world. Firstly how much latitude and freedom Rome gave the states that co-operated with them. Secondly how accurate was Polybius' depiction of the evolution of the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome. Was it the case that initially the Achaean league was able to maintain its independence, but later became subject to Rome? Or rather that Polybius was explaining the situation between the two in terms of the influence of *anacyclosis*, presenting the two acting as equals, so that he could instruct his readers about the decline that had taken place in the Achaean league? In 188BC, when the Aetolian league was defeated by Rome and forced to conclude a humiliating treaty, the Achaean league had expanded to encompass the entire Peloponnese. Eight years later came the

embassy of Callicrates, who according to Polybius, first gave the Romans the idea that they should treat the Greeks as subjects.

In this section I will contend that when Philopoemen tried to pursue a more independent foreign policy, this, coupled with his treatment of Sparta in 188BC, caused concern to the Romans about the dangers it would pose. Fearful about the consequences, the senate exploited the problem of the Spartan exiles, and later the Messenian revolt, to undermine the dominant position that Megalopolis and other Arcadian communities held within the Achaean league, Callicrates using Roman support to gain power for the region in the Peloponnese he represented. Indeed, although Polybius states that Callicrates was the initiator of great calamities for the Greeks, he also admits that Callicrates was quite unaware of the role that he was to play.<sup>53</sup>

For Polybius the great calamity that Callicrates was responsible for in 180BC was initiating the final stage of *anacyclosis* in the Achaean system of government, even though in reality Callicrates was probably trying<sup>to</sup> advance the interests of his own region. Polybius speaks at great length about the unified nature of the Peloponnese under the Achaean league; its other members probably resented the dominance exercised by Megalopolitans within it. I shall suggest that the Romans exploited the situation in Sparta and Messene to weaken the

---

<sup>53</sup> Polyb.24.10.8.



Megalopolitan position within the Achaean league. This encouraged the emergence of politicians like Callicrates who were from states that had been excluded from the centre of power in the Achaean league. Polybius' assertions that Callicrates manipulated the mob and only gained election to the office of Achaean *strategos* through his use of bribery, were to show to his readers the onset of the last phase of *anacyclosis* in the Achaean system of government. Prior to this mission Polybius presents Achaeans like Philopoemen and Aristaenus dealing with Rome as equals, portraying Callicrates' decision to tell the senate that they should in future treat the Achaean league as a subject state as the end of this situation. We should question the extent to which Polybius' representation of the earlier interaction between Achaean leaders such as Philopoemen with Rome was based on his need to show an Achaean league whose democracy declined under the influence of *anacyclosis*.

The first sign that the Achaean league, and Philopoemen in particular, was not willing to assume a subservient position towards Rome came in 188BC, when Flamininus attempted to have a Boeotian exile restored, and requested that the Achaean and Aetolian leagues send embassies to accomplish it. The Achaean league first demanded that Boeotia and Megara settle a number of outstanding lawsuits. The Boeotians refused, so Philopoemen allowed the Megarians to seize property in compensation. Because of the tension caused by these raids,

Flamininus was unable to carry out his plan, since as Polybius states:

*Had the senate at this juncture followed up its order, war would have erupted: but now the senate kept quiet.*<sup>54</sup>

Philopoemen also seems to have tried to interfere with the settlement Flamininus imposed in Messene in 191BC. From a remark made by Diophanes in 185BC, it appears that Philopoemen tried to adjust the settlement around this time.<sup>55</sup> Philopoemen's actions at Sparta had assisted the Romans at the outbreak of the Aetolian/Syrian War, and had been rewarded by Flamininus. Philopoemen had undertaken these actions only because they were in Megalopolis' interests. Once the Aetolian threat to the Peloponnese had been neutralised, Philopoemen may have started to look towards strengthening the Achaean league's alliances with other Greek states to defend against further Roman encroachment.

If this is the case, the diplomatic contacts that the Achaean league renewed with the Hellenistic monarchies shortly afterwards take on a new meaning. Sometime in 188BC, Demetrius of Athens came to renew the alliance that Ptolemy had

---

<sup>54</sup> Polyb.22.4.16. For an account of the episode see Polyb.22.4.1-17. Megara had been a member of the Achaean league since 205BC. See Errington (1969) p. 153.

<sup>55</sup> Polyb.22.10.6-7. Errington (1969) p.157 and Walbank (1979) p. 193. Errington suggests that this restoration would have caused conflict in Boeotia similar to that caused by Flamininus' restoration of Deinocrates in Messene in 191BC, and his attempted actions in Sparta in the same year.

with the Achaean league, and Philopoemen agreed, dispatching an embassy to Egypt.<sup>56</sup> The only problem is that it is not certain which alliance was being renewed.<sup>57</sup> The Achaean league and Egypt had earlier been allied. Aratus concluded an alliance with Ptolemy before he brought Sicyon into the Achaean league. During the Cleomenic War the Ptolemaic monarchy had withdrawn its subsidy to Aratus in favour of Cleomenes. When or whether this relationship had been restored is unknown.

When the embassy from Egypt returned to the Achaean assembly at Megalopolis in 185BC, two further ones accompanied it.<sup>58</sup> After hearing a report regarding the senate's decision not to take any further action over Philopoemen's actions at Sparta in 188BC, the representatives of Eumenes of Pergamum requested that the alliance between the two should be renewed and offered one hundred and twenty talents to pay the Achaean assemblymen.<sup>59</sup> The alliance was renewed, but the money was refused because of fears that this would give Pergamum control over Achaean affairs, along with a dispute over who should control Aegina.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Polyb.22.3.5-6.

<sup>57</sup> See Walbank (1979) p. 178.

<sup>58</sup> Polyb.22.7.1.ff

<sup>59</sup> Polyb.22.7.8.

<sup>60</sup> Polyb.22.8.13.



Next, the Achaean ambassadors to Egypt reported that they had renewed the alliance with Ptolemy and exchanged gifts.<sup>61</sup> Aristaenus voiced an objection, asking which particular alliance was being renewed. Because of the ambassador's failure to be specific as to which alliance they had renewed, he refused to allow ratification of their actions.<sup>62</sup> The final mission was from Seleucus, who offered a fleet of ships and requested the renewal of the alliance between the two. The alliance was renewed, but the gift refused.<sup>63</sup>

The importance of this conference at Megalopolis on later events cannot be over-emphasised. The Achaean league, under Philopoemen's leadership, sought to broaden its diplomatic contacts, renewing an alliance with Egypt that appears to have been dormant for fifty years. The question is should these moves be seen as part of normal Hellenistic diplomacy? Or in view of Philopoemen's earlier moves against Flamininus' settlement in Boeotia and Messene, as an attempt to form a system of alliances to protect the Achaean league from further Roman encroachment? Since 198BC Megalopolitans within the Achaean league had supported Roman interests. This had been in a period when the Aetolian league and Sparta had threatened the Achaean league, and specifically, Megalopolitan interests in the Peloponnese. Once

---

<sup>61</sup> Polyb.22.9.1.

<sup>62</sup> Polyb.22.9.12. Errington (1969) p. 164 suggests that Aristaenus wished to publicly humiliate Philopoemen and Lycortas.

<sup>63</sup> Polyb.22.9.13. Walbank (1979) p.192. possibly because they had refused Eumenes' gift

the Aetolian and Spartan threat had gone, it would appear that Philopoemen was trying to gain as many allies as possible to prevent further Roman encroachment on Achaean affairs.

Aristaenus' role and his objections might give us some indication of how this move was viewed. He did <sup>not</sup> object to the renewal of the alliance with Ptolemy, but merely to the terms on which it would be doing so. Aristaenus did publicly humiliate Philopoemen, making him and the ambassadors appear incompetent, so possibly he was engaged in political games with his rival. However, this does not imply that Aristaenus represented a pro-Roman party; he had no objection to the Achaean league renewing the two other alliances. The Egyptians had abandoned the Achaean league during the Cleomenic War. Possibly Aristaenus felt that the Achaean league should not renew its relationship with a state that had earlier abandoned it to the mercies of Sparta.

Taken in the context of the psychological impact that Antiochus' and Philip V's defeats had on the Greeks, it appears that the Achaean league was from a relatively early stage acting against the possibility of further Roman encroachment, seeking allies in the Hellenistic World. Unless they were invited, it appears unlikely that the representatives of the three most important Hellenistic monarchs would try and renew their alliances with the Achaean league at the same time.

The Roman response was swift. Shortly after the conference at Megalopolis, when the Nemean festival was in progress, Quintus Caecilius Metellus, a Roman envoy on his way back from Macedonia, arrived.<sup>64</sup> Why he chose to make this detour is not made clear, since he was not originally told to deal with Peloponnesian affairs. As Polybius makes apparent, Caecilius was dissatisfied with events in Sparta. The senate's earlier reaction, had stated that Sparta was essentially an internal matter for the Achaean league. Although the senate had sent a letter expressing its displeasure at the way that Philopoemen had acted in 188BC, it did not revoke its previous decision. On Caecilius' arrival, he requested that Aristaenus summon the magistrates of the Achaean league, and according to Polybius, proceeded to:

*Find fault with them for having treated the Spartans with unwarranted cruelty and severity; and exhorted them to correct past errors.*<sup>65</sup>

Caecilius' intervention, especially as the senate had decided that it was an internal matter for the Achaean league, seems surprising. Errington suggests that Aristaenus invited him, and this is what Polybius implies, stating that during Caecilius' speech Aristaenus remained silent, thus indicating his agreement with his remarks. Caecilius requested that the Achaean assembly

---

<sup>64</sup> Polyb.22.10.1.

<sup>65</sup> Polyb.22.10.2.Erskine (2000) p. 175 points to Quintus Caecilius' anger, a typical barbarian characteristic, in Polybius' depiction of his behaviour at Megalopolis.



be called to hear his complaints about the league's treatment of Sparta. The four officials responsible, Aristaenus, Diophanes, Philopoemen and Lycortas, all of whom were Megalopolitans, refused, and they informed Caecilius that the assembly could not be called unless there was written permission from the senate, forcing him to back down.<sup>66</sup>

Caecilius' intervention raises interesting questions about the relationship between the senate and Roman commanders in the field. Caecilius' actions contradicted the senate's previous decision to leave the question of the Spartan exiles to the Achaean league. Polybius states that the Achaeans blamed Aristaenus and Diophanes for his intervention, but along with Philopoemen and Lycortas they agreed not to call the meeting requested.<sup>67</sup>

So if the senate did not plan Caecilius' intervention, why did he choose to contradict its policy, especially as Polybius presents his behaviour as an angry and irrational act? One must consider whether Philopoemen's attempts to expand the relations that the Achaean league had with the Hellenistic monarchies was viewed as a threat by the Romans; also the independence Roman commanders had to take action when they saw fit. It would appear that any attempt by the Achaean league to maintain an independent foreign policy was contrary to Roman interests.

---

<sup>66</sup> Polyb.22.10.11-12.

<sup>67</sup> Gruen suggests that after the Roman/Achaean treaty, a special law was passed that allowed individual Romans to call assemblies only if they had such permission. See Gruen (1984) p. 37.

Although Polybius presents these actions as part of the Achaean league maintaining its independence, in reality the decision to renew alliances with the Hellenistic kingdoms in the aftermath of the Aetolian/Syrian War would have been seen as suspicious. As the senior Roman official present in the region, Caecilius might have felt it necessary to react to the challenge posed to Rome by the conference at Megalopolis.

The result of this intervention was the dispatch of two embassies to Rome, one from Sparta and another from the Achaean league. The Achaean embassy, led by Apollonidas of Sicyon, was sent to apologise for their behaviour towards Caecilius.<sup>68</sup> Areus and Alcibiades, whom Polybius describes as old exiles who had recently been restored to Sparta by Philopoemen, led the Spartan embassy.<sup>69</sup> The identity of Areus and Alcibiades is confused, as is their official status. Errington sees them as an extremist faction within Sparta who did not represent the government, but Shimron and Walbank suggest that there was a change in Sparta's government shortly beforehand, and that they were official representatives.<sup>70</sup> Polybius merely states that they:

---

<sup>68</sup> Walbank (1979) p.195. The identity of Apollonidas and his association with Philopoemen is unknown. Walbank's assertion that there was little opposition within the Achaean league over the question of Sparta should be treated with caution. We only have the evidence provided by the Megalopolitan Polybius.

<sup>69</sup> Polyb.22.11.6-7.

<sup>70</sup> Errington (1969) p.175; Shimron (1972) pp. 108, 140-146; Walbank (1979) p.196.

*Went on a mission against the Achaeans to the ruling power, and accused those who had so unexpectedly saved them and restored them to their homes.<sup>71</sup>*

It would appear that Polybius considered this embassy a betrayal, but his words indicate something about Sparta's willingness to remain a member of the Achaean league. Philopoemen had humiliated Sparta in 188BC; it is reasonable to suppose that he left in control those who were most favourably disposed at the time to Spartan membership of the Achaean league. Unless there was a change of government in Sparta, which appears unlikely, it would appear that even those who co-operated with Philopoemen in 188BC viewed Spartan membership of the Achaean league unfavourably. It is also possible that the Spartans may have received an assurance from Caecilius that Sparta's membership of the Achaean league would be reviewed.

The senate had changed its opinion about the Spartan exile question by the time that the embassies arrived in Rome. After hearing the Spartan complaints, they dispatched a mission led by Appius Claudius Pulcher to investigate the matter, and on his arrival he found that the Achaean league had sentenced Areus and Alcibiades to death in their absence. In the following debate, Lycortas defended Philopoemen's actions in Sparta in a long

---

<sup>71</sup> Polyb.22.11.8.



speech.<sup>72</sup> Appius' extremely blunt and brief reaction was to state that:

*He strongly advised the Achaeans to achieve a reconciliation while it was still open to them to do so of their own free will, for fear that they should be forced to it later against their will and under compulsion.*<sup>73</sup>

Should this reversal in policy be seen as a sign of Roman concern about the fate of a few Spartan exiles? Caecilius' intervention seems to have persuaded the senate to become more closely involved in events in the Peloponnese. It would appear that Roman interest in the Spartan question was actually based on their concern about Philopoemen's attempt to renew diplomatic contacts with other Greek states, whilst maintaining the fiction that Rome had in reality brought freedom to the Greeks from Macedonian tyranny.

The result was the dispatch of more embassies to the senate from the Peloponnese, since according to Pausanias, Pulcher encouraged the Spartans to send representatives to Rome.<sup>74</sup> At this point, events become confused, since there were several missions from Sparta. The first was led by Lysis, who wanted a complete restoration of all the property he and his supporters had possessed before they were exiled. The second, led by Areus and

---

<sup>72</sup> Livy.39.36-37.

<sup>73</sup> Livy.39.37.19.

<sup>74</sup> Polyb.23.4.1. Paus.7.9.4.

Alcibiades, wanted the restoration of all their property up to the value of one talent, with the rest to be distributed amongst the rest of the citizens. Serippus, who supported the Achaean league, led a third mission, the final one being led by Chaeron who represented those killed at Compasion.<sup>75</sup>

The senate's decision was to give the matter over to a commission to three, composed of Flamininus, Caecilius and Appius Claudius, who were to reach a solution to this question.<sup>76</sup> Badian points to the expertise and close involvement in Greek affairs that the three commissioners had.<sup>77</sup> Flamininus had been involved with attempts to settle Spartan affairs in 191BC, and was the key figure in developing the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome. Caecilius had raised the issue of the Spartan exiles at the Nemean Games in 185BC, after the senate had written saying that they considered the matter closed. Appius Claudius had been sent by the senate to investigate the affairs of the Achaean league after Caecilius' intervention, and on assessing the situation, supported the view that the matter warranted Roman intervention.

---

<sup>75</sup> Who exactly represented the Spartan government is a matter of guesswork. For example Errington (1969) p.288 argues that apart from Chaeron's group, all the others were in exile. Shimron (1972) p. 149 that all the Spartan representatives apart from Serippus' group were in exile.

<sup>76</sup> Polyb.23.4.7.

<sup>77</sup> Badian (1958) p. 90.



The commission proposed that all the exiles should be restored along with the bodies of those killed at Compasion, and that Sparta should remain a member of the Achaean league.<sup>78</sup> However, property was not mentioned in the settlement; since this was the issue that divided the Spartans the question was essentially left unresolved. To analyse what the decision of the Roman commission would mean, by restoring the exiles without making any provision for the restoration of property, they might have been trying to weaken the Megalopolitan position within the Achaean league by creating the potential for further discord. According to Polybius, the Achaean envoy Xenarchus was unwilling to agree to these measures, and only did so because he feared the consequences of not doing so.<sup>79</sup> This appears to suggest that not only were the Romans aware of situation in the Peloponnese with various ethnic groups contending for position over each other, but that they were exploiting the situation to further their control over the Greek world.

### **The Messenian War 183BC**

The process of subverting the position that Megalopolitans held within the Achaean league by the senate continued during the war with Messene. The reasons for this conflict are quite clear. Messene had become a member of the Achaean league during the Aetolian/Syrian War under Flamininus' direction. In view of its

---

<sup>78</sup> Polyb.23.4.8-9.

<sup>79</sup> Polyb.23.4.15.



earlier alliance with the Aetolian league, and hostility to the Achaean league, its membership was not voluntary. Philopoemen, who interfered with Flamininus' settlement in some unspecified manner, made this situation worse.<sup>80</sup> What is of interest is the way the Romans exploited the issue to further their control over the Greek world. Flamininus was responsible for Messene's membership of the Achaean league. His attempt to assist Messene to secede, along with the senate's refusal to assist the Achaean league to regain control over Messene suggests that the relationship between Rome and Arcadian communities in the Peloponnese that Flamininus had created in the aftermath of the Second Macedonian War had broken down. I shall argue that the senate was exploiting regional differences in the Peloponnese to remove the hold that Megalopolitans had over the Achaean league in order to promote the interests of those who might be more favourably disposed to supporting Rome.

According to Polybius, Deinocrates approached Flamininus, sometime in 183BC to discuss Messene's continued membership of the Achaean league.<sup>81</sup> After listening to Deinocrates' complaints, Flamininus requested that the Achaean popular assembly be called to discuss the matter, but Philopoemen refused because permission was not available from the senate,

---

<sup>80</sup> How exactly Philopoemen interfered with the settlement is unknown. According to Walbank (1979) p. 193, it must have been in a manner that weakened Deinocrates' position.

<sup>81</sup> Polyb.22.5.1f.

and Flamininus appears to have abandoned his attempts to restore Deinocrates, at least publicly.<sup>82</sup> Soon afterwards war broke out between the Achaean league and Messene when the latter tried to secede. Around the same time, there appears to have been a change in the Spartan government, undoubtedly brought about in the aftermath of the Roman commission. As with so much else in this period of Spartan history, it is not clear who exactly was in control.<sup>83</sup> What is important is the embassy sent by the Achaean league to gain Roman support in restoring both Messene and Sparta to the Achaean league. Before the senate received the ambassadors, they requested that Q. Marcius Philippus, who had just returned from Macedonia, give his opinion on the matter. He stated that:

*If the senate paid no attention to the request for the present... Sparta would be reconciled with Messene, upon which the Achaeans would be only too glad to appeal to the Romans.*<sup>84</sup>

This appears to indicate an informed knowledge of the situation within the Achaean league, with the senate drawing on

---

<sup>82</sup> Polyb.23.5.16-17.

<sup>83</sup> Errington (1969) p. 289 argues that the group of Chaeron allied with that of Serippus to take power. Shimron (1972) pp.146-8 argues that Lysis' group took power since they were exiled in 185BC by Areus and Alcibiades, who were exiled after their embassy to Rome. He bases this on the murder of two Spartan ambassadors on their way to Rome. One of them, Agesipolis, was a former Spartan king associated with Cleomenes. See Polyb.23.6.1-3.

the knowledge and advice of those who had recent experience of Greek affairs. Thus, when the embassy from the Achaean league requested that supplies from Italy be prevented from reaching Messene, and that Roman troops be dispatched in accordance with the treaty of alliance, the senate replied that:

*Not even if the people of Sparta, Corinth or Argos deserted the league should the Achaeans be surprised if the senate did not think that it concerned them. Giving full publicity to this reply, which was a sort of proclamation that the Romans would not interfere with those who wished to desert the Achaean league, they continued to detain the envoys, waiting to see how the Achaeans would get on at Messene.*<sup>85</sup>

Errington suggests that it was the senate's intention to force the Achaean league to negotiate a solution, and that the ambassadors were retained to make sure the answer did not become public.<sup>86</sup> Walbank rightly points out that there was no point in retaining the ambassadors if they were to keep secret something that the Romans wished to publicise.<sup>87</sup> He suggests that the Romans wished to maintain pressure on the Achaean league to find a settlement to the Messenian question.

By refusing to send assistance to the Achaean league, and encouraging other *poleis* to leave it, Polybius presents the senate

---

<sup>84</sup> Polyb.23.9.9-10.

<sup>85</sup> Polyb.23.9.12-14.

<sup>86</sup> Errington (1969) pp.186-7.

<sup>87</sup> Walbank (1979) p.229.



laying down a challenge. However, did the senate view the Achaean league's inability to restore the Spartan exiles as a direct threat? The Achaean league's request that supplies from Italy should not be sent to Messene, and that Roman troops be dispatched, was merely a formal way of gaining Roman support. The senate's refusal was a means of expressing its disapproval at Philopoemen's renewal of the Achaean league's links with the Hellenistic monarchies. Alone, the Achaean league was a relatively small body, many of whose members had been forcibly incorporated. If Philopoemen's intention was to liberate Greece from Roman occupation, he could only hope to achieve this goal in conjunction with others.

It would appear that the senate viewed the renewal of the Achaean league's alliances with the Hellenistic monarchies during the Megalopolis conference of 185BC as a threat to their position and authority, hence the refusal to supply assistance. The senate appears to have wished to avoid conflict, instead opting for an indirect approach. With the Aetolian league reduced in power and no longer able to intervene in Peloponnesian affairs, and Sparta a member of the Achaean league, the initial reasons that Megalopolitans like Philopoemen had for supporting Rome disappeared. The senate was left with a political elite within the Achaean league, which by taking an independent line in foreign policy, seemed not to be accepting their *de-facto* status as Roman subjects, despite their "liberation" from Macedonia. They might

have felt that it was better for Roman interests to reduce the dominance that Megalopolitans had over the Achaean league, and promote the interests of other regions in the Peloponnese, whose political representatives would be dependent on Roman support. The senate's answer that they would not prevent the shipment of arms or supplies from Italy should not be seen as a direct threat, since it is unlikely that the Messenians relied on supplies from Italy. It was more of a public reprimand, informing Megalopolitans that the policy they were following was not satisfactory, since they were not acting as befitted Roman subjects.

Indeed, when Lycortas quelled the revolt, and the senate was informed of the victory, its reaction was quite different. According to Polybius, they recalled the Achaean ambassador Xenarchus, and:

*Entirely ignoring their former answer, they gave another reply to the same envoys, informing them that they had provided that no one should import from Italy arms or corn to Messene.<sup>88</sup>*

A further consequence of the Messenian revolt was the death of Philopoemen. He was captured and executed by the Messenians during the fighting, leaving a vacuum in the leadership of the Achaean league.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Polyb.23.17.3-4.

<sup>89</sup> Plut.*Philop.*20.1-3.

## The resolution of the Spartan question and the embassy of Callicrates.

This section will deal with the resolution of the Spartan exile question, in particular Callicrates' actions and Polybius' depiction of them. My contention will be that Callicrates' actions should not be seen as those of a traitor to the Greek world, or a pro-Roman. Although Golan has argued that Callicrates and Polybius came from similar political backgrounds, this is based on the assumption that the Achaean league functioned as Polybius claimed it did.<sup>90</sup> The principal difference between Callicrates and Polybius is that Achaean *poleis* such as Leontium lost control of the league they had founded to Dorians like Aratus and Arcadians like Polybius. Callicrates' actions should be seen in the context of an internal struggle for control over the Peloponnese; his concern in 180BC was to challenge the domination that Arcadians had over the Achaean league, and re-assert the position of his own region.

More importantly, Polybius wrote his histories in order to explain to his readers how, through the workings of *anacyclosis* and *tyche*, the Romans had come to control the Greek world. Polybius states that it was Callicrates who gave the senate the idea that the Greeks should be treated like subjects for the first time. Polybius also depicts Callicrates' mission resulting in an

---

<sup>90</sup> Golan(1995) p. 75. He earlier suggested that after Megalopolis had been integrated into the Achaean league it was unable to preserve its independence. Golan (1995) p.13.



increased role for the mob in dictating the decisions of the Achaean assembly and bringing corrupt politicians into the highest offices of the Achaean league. In effect Polybius was presenting to his readers the internal decline that had taken place in the Achaean league at a time when Rome was extending its control over the Greek world. Callicrates' entry into Achaean politics was therefore part of the natural process of *anacyclosis* that influenced the system of government in a democracy like the Achaean league.

After Messene was brought under control it was decided to re-admit Sparta to the Achaean league.<sup>91</sup> When and why Sparta had left is unknown.<sup>92</sup> Although the Achaean league was willing to accept Sparta, according to Polybius, it was unwilling to restore to Sparta:

*Those of the old exiles who had behaved with such ingratitude and irreverence to them.*<sup>93</sup>

They appear to have been the remnants of the group represented by Areus and Alcibiades who were unable to accept the Achaean league's authority.<sup>94</sup> The result was the dispatch of two embassies to the senate, one led by Bippus of Argos

---

<sup>91</sup> Polyb.23.17.5.- 18.5.

<sup>92</sup>For opinions on what exactly was happening in Sparta, see Errington (1969) p. 290 and Shimron (1972) p. 114. Both agree that there was an alliance between Serippus and Chaeron at this time, but not on much else.

<sup>93</sup> Polyb.23.17.10.

<sup>94</sup> Shimron (1972) p.110 and Walbank (1979) p.252.

representing the Achaean league, the Spartans sending Chaeron and the exiles Cleitis and Diactorius.<sup>95</sup> When the exiles appeared at Rome, the senate, according to Polybius:

*Promised the exiles that they would write to the Achaeans begging for their return to their country.*<sup>96</sup>

When Bippus arrived to represent the Achaean league a few days later, the senate gave a different reply. According to Polybius:

*The senate gave them a courteous reception, expressing no displeasure with anyone for the conduct of the matter.*<sup>97</sup>

Why would the senate give two contradictory messages to these embassies? Polybius states the Spartans had gained their letter through importunity, though there is no evidence of it.<sup>98</sup> The Achaean leadership genuinely seem to have believed that Bippus was informed by the senate that they had taken no action, and Walbank suggests that they might have informed Bippus that the Spartans begged for this letter and that it was only given with the greatest reluctance.<sup>99</sup>

An indication of why the senate might have taken this approach may be found in the embassy composed of Lycortas, Polybius and Aratus of Sicyon, which was sent to Ptolemy to take

---

<sup>95</sup> Polyb.23.18.5.

<sup>96</sup> Polyb.24.1.5.

<sup>97</sup> Polyb.24.1.7.

<sup>98</sup> Errington (1969) pp.199-200.

<sup>99</sup> Walbank (1979) p.255.

receipt of some warships he had donated to the Achaean league.<sup>100</sup> That the Romans viewed this action as a challenge to their wider interests might explain the senate's contradictory answers. Although the Achaean league was not acting in a threatening manner, the senate might have feared the potential threat posed by Lycortas' continuation of Philopoemen's policy in broadening the number of alliances that the Achaean league had with other Hellenistic states. The very fact that Lycortas continued this policy might have indicated to the senate that Flamininus' decision to support Megalopolitan interests and primacy in the Peloponnese was mistaken. Both Flamininus and Caecilius had previously used the question of the Spartan exiles to curb the power of the Megalopolitans within the Achaean League. Again, if one looks at the leadership of the Achaean league, the prominence of Megalopolitans is apparent throughout this episode. As Eckstein points out, Polybius, in the fragment following Callicrates' embassy, presents Aristaenus as a patriot whose actions were at all times honourable.<sup>101</sup> Regarding Polybius' depiction of Aristaenus' policy towards Rome, Eckstein points out that Polybius is actually defending it.<sup>102</sup> Although there appears to

---

<sup>100</sup> Polyb.24.6.1-7. Aratus was probably the grandson of the earlier Achaean leader and sent because of his family's earlier relationship with Egypt. The mission was cancelled.

<sup>101</sup> See Eckstein (1995) p. 200-3.

<sup>102</sup> Eckstein (1995) p. 203.n.39 suggests that even though Polybius reported a suspicion that Aristaenus was responsible for the intervention of Quintus Caecilius at Megalopolis in 185BC, this does not undermine his general assessment of Aristaenus as a patriot.



have been a disagreement between Philopoemen and Aristaenus about the policy that the Achaean league should follow regarding its relationship with Rome, Polybius does not accuse Aristaenus of treachery.

However, Philopoemen's death during the Messenian War created a vacuum within the Achaean league's leadership that an aspiring and ambitious politician from the north-west of the Peloponnese, who felt that the interests of his region had been neglected by the Achaean league, might have sought to fill. Much of the trouble that had arisen between the Achaean league and Rome was due to the inability of Megalopolitans to settle the question of the Spartan exiles. Sparta was naturally an important consideration for an Arcadian like Polybius; to a politician from one of the original members of the Achaean league like Callicrates it was a relatively unimportant matter that should be quickly settled without provoking Rome.

Thus, when there was a fresh communication from the senate regarding the Spartan exiles in 180BC, the Achaean *strategos* Hyperbatus of Dyme raised the question at the assembly.<sup>103</sup> According to Polybius, the Achaean league split into two groups. One was led by Lycortas, who advised that the Achaeans should take no action, arguing that to do so would:

---

<sup>103</sup> Walbank (1979) p.261 for Hyperbatus of Dyme. His father had earlier been *strategos* during the Cleomenic War. Hyperbatus was the first non-Megalopolitan to hold the office of Achaean *strategos* since 205BC

*Violate our oaths, our laws and the inscribed conventions  
that hold our league together.*<sup>104</sup>

Callicrates objected to this position stating, according to Polybius, that the will of Rome was above all else.<sup>105</sup> Despite this, as Derow points out, it is important to remember that in no extant passage of his work does Polybius describe Callicrates as pro-Roman.<sup>106</sup> Although the same is true of his depiction of Aristaenus, the difference in the characterisation of the two in Polybius' work is evident.<sup>107</sup> If one considers the different regional perspective that Callicrates had towards Sparta from that of Megalopolitans like Aristaenus and Lycortas, his intervention and suggested solution to the problem might reflect the perspective of one of the founder members of the Achaean league. Compared to

---

<sup>104</sup> Polyb.24.8.4. Walbank (1979) p.261 argues that the Achaean league had introduced new laws to prevent any further discussion of the Spartan question.

<sup>105</sup> Polyb.24.8.6

<sup>106</sup> Eckstein (1995) p. 205 makes reference to Derow's argument, but draws attention to Polybius' account of others who describe Callicrates as pro-Roman. The only passage quoted by Eckstein in support of this position, (Polyb.30. 27.) does not describe Polybius as pro-Roman. It actually states that after an attempt to restore Polybius and the other Achaean exiles failed, in the public bath, bathers refused to share the same water as Callicrates since they considered his presence morally polluting. Polybius also states that when Callicrates was declared the victor at public festivals some of the audience made noises to show their displeasure. How Polybius in Italy knew about this is left unsaid, and Plutarch makes similar references to expressions of distaste against Socrates' accusers. See Plut.*Mor.*538A.cf Walbank (1979) pp.455.

<sup>107</sup> See Walbank (1979) pp.264-267 for a comparison between Polybius' treatment of Aristaenus and Callicrates.

Megalopolis, *poleis* such as Leontium, one of the original members of the Achaean league, had no history of animosity towards Sparta. There is also the possibility of personal ambition playing a role; possibly Callicrates saw supporting Rome as the best way for advancing his own ambitions. However, suggesting that Callicrates' ambition was purely personal fails to take into consideration the way that *poleis* like Leontium had been sidelined after the expansion of the Achaean league into Arcadia during the 230s BC. Callicrates may have seen this moment as an opportunity to re-assert the position of the original Achaean *poleis* within the league they had created.

Returning to the embassy itself, according to Polybius, when the Achaean assembly met to decide what action to take, they appointed an embassy consisting of Callicrates of Leontium, Lydiades of Megalopolis and Aratus of Sicyon to point out to the senate what Polybius states was Lycortas' opinion.<sup>108</sup> That they should have sent Callicrates to express Lycortas' views seems extraordinary, especially since Polybius makes no reference to the other ambassadors' comments to the senate, despite their illustrious ancestry.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Polyb.24.8.8.

<sup>109</sup> Callicrates' two companions share the same names as Lydiades who brought Megalopolis within the Achaean league and Aratus, who had been so important in expanding the Achaean league. It is usually accepted that Callicrates' fellow ambassadors were their descendants.



When he arrived in Rome, Polybius states that Callicrates departed from the position held by Lycortas and:

*He not only attempted to bring audacious accusations against his political opponents, but to lecture the senate.*<sup>110</sup>

According to Polybius' account of this mission, Callicrates is reputed to have told the senate that:

*It was the fault of the Romans themselves that the Greeks, instead of complying with their wishes, disobeyed their messages and orders.*<sup>111</sup>

Callicrates proceeded to claim, according to Polybius, that there were two parties in all the Greek states, one of which maintained that all the written complaints of the Romans be carried out, no matter what their own laws might state. In the case of the Achaean league, those who suggested that their own laws took precedent were in the ascendancy, and as he pointed out to the assembled senators:

*The consequence being that the supporters of Rome were constantly exposed to the contempt and slander of the mob, while it was the reverse with their opponents.*<sup>112</sup>

Callicrates, according to Polybius, proceeded to argue that the Romans should indicate which of the two parties he indicated

---

<sup>110</sup> Polyb.24.8.9.

<sup>111</sup> See Polyb.24.9.1ff for the speech.

<sup>112</sup> Polyb.24.9.4-5.

existed within the Achaean league they favoured. Were they to do so, Callicrates argued that:

*If the senate now gave some token of their disapproval the political leaders would soon go over to the side of Rome, and the multitude would follow out of fear. But in the event of the senate neglecting to do so, every one would change and adopt the other attitude, which in the eyes of the multitude was more dignified and honourable.*<sup>113</sup>

How accurate is Polybius' account of Callicrates' speech? Polybius states that Callicrates used these, or similar words in his address to the senate. That he states the obvious to his readers suggests a defensive attitude.<sup>114</sup> Returning to his account of the senate's reaction to Callicrates' speech, Polybius states that:

*The senate, thinking that what Callicrates had said was in their interest, and learning from him that they should exalt those who supported their decrees, and humble those who opposed them, now first began the policy of weakening those members of the several states who worked for the best, and of strengthening those, who, no matter whether rightly or wrongly, appealed to its authority.*<sup>115</sup>

Accepting that the Romans remained ignorant of the possibilities offered by exploiting internal divisions within the

---

<sup>113</sup> Polyb. 24.9.6-7.

<sup>114</sup> Polyb. 24.10.1.

<sup>115</sup> Polyb. 24.10.3-4.



Greek elite, as Polybius states, until Callicrates pointed it out to them, is unrealistic. From 185BC, the senate had used the question of the Spartan exiles to weaken the Megalopolitan position within the Achaean league. Flamininus had earlier secured the support of Megalopolitans like Philopoemen and Aristaenus by granting them control over former Aetolian allies in the Peloponnese like Elis, Sparta and Messene during the Aetolian/Syrian War. Therefore, we should be asking whether Polybius portrays the events surrounding Callicrates' embassy in a manner intended to show to his readers the onset of *anacyclosis* in the Achaean league's system of government?

Up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, discussions of Callicrates' actions describe him as a traitor to the Greek world. The first effort to see him in a different light came with Badian, who argued that Callicrates was an ordinary man making the most of an extraordinary situation.<sup>116</sup> Derow supports this view, suggesting that Polybius' depiction of this mission is totally utilitarian in character; Callicrates' advice to the senate produced no real benefits either to the Greeks or even to the Romans themselves.<sup>117</sup> Eckstein on the other hand argues that Polybius depicts Callicrates' actions as those of a profoundly immoral man who

---

<sup>116</sup> Badian (1958) p.90-1.

<sup>117</sup> Derow (1970) p.13. In the CAH, Vol 8, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), p.300 n.15 Derow, making reference to his 1970 article states that "the connection between Callicrates' démarche at Rome and Perseus' accession to the Macedonian throne needs very much to be borne in mind".



betrayed "Achaëa", "the best" and "justice".<sup>118</sup> Eckstein argues that to understand Polybius' condemnation of Callicrates it is important to remember that for Polybius the best policy was to deal with Rome on almost equal terms.<sup>119</sup> By telling the Romans that they should treat the Greeks as subjects, Eckstein argues that Callicrates changed the relationship, and this is why Polybius holds him in such contempt. However, as Derow earlier noted:

*Roman intervention in the affairs of the league had been brought about by the returned Spartans in 188, and their example was followed often in the succeeding years. From that point on (if not even earlier) Achaean sovereignty over the internal affairs of the league was far from complete. This was recognised by Polybius.*<sup>120</sup>

As Derow points out, Callicrates' embassy is not recorded in Livy, suggesting that the Romans did not regard it as a major turning point.<sup>121</sup> Though there is no evidence for the Achaean league for the following five years, even if it was a period of unrest within the Achaean league, it produced no embassies to or from Rome.<sup>122</sup> Derow argues that Callicrates merely "succeeded in

---

<sup>118</sup> Eckstein (1995) p.205.

<sup>119</sup> Polyb.24.10.9. Eckstein (1995) p.205.

<sup>120</sup> Derow (1970) p. 20.

<sup>121</sup> There is the possibility that Livy failed to include this embassy since he may have thought it better not to mention Polybius' assertion that Roman policy was made by Greek subjects.

<sup>122</sup> Derow (1970) p .21.

introducing Roman support and fear of Roman power into the local politics of the Greek states, and he was instrumental in the adoption of intervention in local affairs as a standard of Roman diplomacy".<sup>123</sup> According to Derow, Callicrates' actions paved the way for the emergence of a new generation of Greek leaders who used Rome and the fear of Roman power to extend their own authority.<sup>124</sup> This is implied by Polybius who states that the senate:

*Wrote not only to the Achaeans on the subject of the return of the exiles, begging them to contribute to strengthening the position of these men, but to the Aetolians, Epirots, Athenians, Boeotians, and Acarnanians, calling them all as it were to witnesses if for the express purpose of crushing the Achaeans. Speaking of Callicrates alone with no mention of the other envoys, they wrote in their official answer that there ought to be more men in the several states like Callicrates.*<sup>125</sup>

Polybius states that the senate took Callicrates at his word, and not only supported him, but wrote in support of politicians in other states who like Callicrates were willing to support Roman interests without question. His implication is that before this point Rome had no imperialistic designs in Greece.<sup>126</sup> If the senate

---

<sup>123</sup> Derow (1970) p.21

<sup>124</sup> Derow (1970) pp.21-22.

<sup>125</sup> Polyb.24.10.6-7.

<sup>126</sup> Walbank (1979) p.263 suggests that they were writing to the states in which the exiles lived.



actually wrote to other Greek states to indicate that they regarded Callicrates' embassy as marking a change in their attitude towards Greece, why does Livy fail to record the embassy? Despite Polybius' claims, although Callicrates was elected as Achaean *strategos*, probably in 180-79BC, according to Polybius through bribery and corruption, as Gruen points out, the four known Achaean *stratego*i between 179-168BC were opponents of Callicrates, indicating that there was no real change within the Achaean league.<sup>127</sup> If one accepts that Rome supported Callicrates in a public manner, as Polybius argues that it did, it is surprising that the result of this support was not more evident.<sup>128</sup>

Although Polybius presents it as such, was Callicrates' embassy the defining point in the evolution of the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome? The Spartan exile question was essentially a Hellenic one. Callicrates' handling of its settlement and Polybius' depiction of it should not be seen solely in terms of the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome. If one looks at the eventual settlement, found on an inscription erected at Olympia by the Spartans, no mention is

---

<sup>127</sup> Polyb.24.10.15. for the charge of bribery. Gruen (1984) p. 500; Xenarchus in 175-4BC, Archon 172-1BC and 170-69BC, Xenon 168-7BC. All are from Megalopolis.

<sup>128</sup> Walbank (1979) p. 263 accepts that no real change is evident in the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome, suggesting that Polybius exaggerated the importance of Callicrates' mission.



made of Rome in the text, and Callicrates alone is thanked for having restored the Spartans.<sup>129</sup>

One must remember that Callicrates represented regional interests that were at variance with Polybius' attitude towards Sparta. *Poleis* like Leontium had become politically isolated after the expansion of the Achaean league into Arcadia during the third century. Callicrates may have seen complying with Rome over the Spartan exile question as the best chance to restore some of the position *poleis* like Leontium had lost within the Achaean league. Possibly Callicrates' criticism of the actions of Lycortas and other Megalopolitans came from their domineering behaviour towards other states in the Peloponnese; Polybius attacks Callicrates for raising the Messenian question, even though the Romans had not complained about it.<sup>130</sup> It was not the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome that changed. Rather, Callicrates' emergence undermined the hold that Megalopolitans like Polybius held over the Achaean league.

Does Polybius regard Callicrates' embassy to Rome as a major turning point for other reasons? During the period from the initial alliance between the Achaean league and Flamininus in 198BC, until the point where Callicrates departed from the position Polybius claims he had agreed with Lycortas before his

---

<sup>129</sup> SIG<sup>3</sup> 634.

<sup>130</sup> See Polyb.24.10.13.

departure, Polybius' histories present Rome and the Achaean league acting almost as equals. Polybius had to show his readers the point where the Achaean league's democratic system of government began to decline through the workings of *anacyclosis*. Polybius presents Callicrates' emergence leading to an increase in the role of the mob in the proceedings of the Achaean league's assembly; Callicrates informing the senate about the fickleness of the mob and how it could be manipulated to Rome's advantage in increasing its control over Greece. Polybius' emphases on Callicrates' mission as a turning point in the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome may be related to his belief in the role that *anacyclosis* played in allowing the Romans to achieve control over the Achaean league. Polybius emphasises to his readers that before Callicrates' embassy the Achaean league's relations with Rome were on more or less equal terms. After Callicrates had addressed the senate this situation changed. As Polybius states:

*For it was still possible for the Achaeans even at this stage to deal with Rome on more or less equal terms, as they had remained faithful to her ever since they had taken part in the most important times, I mean the wars with Philip and Antiochus, but now after the Achaean league had become stronger and more prosperous than at any time*



*recorded in history, this effrontery of Callicrates was the beginning of a change for the worse.*<sup>131</sup>

Finally there is the question of how Rome regarded Callicrates' intervention. That it played an important role in the formulation of Roman policy seems unlikely. The emergence of a political challenge to the status quo in the Achaean league undoubtedly worked in the senate's favour. By agreeing to settle the Spartan question in a manner that was acceptable to most sides, Callicrates' actions suited Roman interests. The Spartan problem had emerged as a result of Caecilius' intervention in 185BC, and had been prolonged by the decision of the senatorial commission appointed to resolve the matter. Roman actions towards the Achaean league during this period should not be seen as a reaction against the threat posed by an anti-Roman faction, but as an attempt by Rome to manipulate the situation in the Peloponnese. It would appear that having brought Greece under its control, the actions of both Philopoemen and Lycortas in renewing links with the Hellenistic monarchies were viewed with suspicion by the Romans. By supporting Callicrates' restoration of the Spartan exiles, the Romans allowed the emergence of a politician who was opposed to the Megalopolitans who had dominated the political institutions of the Achaean league for so long, and who, more importantly needed Rome in order to retain his position.

---

<sup>131</sup> Polyb.24.10.9-10.



## Conclusion.

Aristaenus' comments about the Aetolian league's proposal that they should be allowed to persuade Nabis to evacuate Argos voluntarily is indicative of the internal divisions in the Greek world, and how the Romans exploited them to further their control. By removing Nabis from Argos and restoring it to the Achaean league, Flamininus sent a clear signal that the Peloponnese would in future come under the control of the Achaean league. During the Aetolian/Syrian War this control became apparent. Polybius emphasises the independence of the Achaean league during this conflict, along with the admirable behaviour of Romans like Flamininus. However, Polybius was attempting to show how *anacyclosis* had influenced both the Achaean and Roman systems of polity during the period covered in his histories where the fates of the Achaean league and Rome had become intertwined. Initially both had acted as equals; but only because the suspension of *anacyclosis* in the Roman system of government had made it almost an ideal state, and the Achaean league was a democracy whose system of government had yet to be corrupted. In reality, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Megalopolitan *strategoi* of the Achaean league undertook actions at Sparta in 192BC that were beneficial to Roman interests, and

were rewarded by Flamininus with control over three former allies of the Aetolian league.

Though Megalopolitans did benefit as a result of their co-operation with Rome, in particular with Flamininus, this does not necessarily imply that they were pro-Roman. As the humiliating treatment of Sparta by Philopoemen in 188BC suggests, they co-operated with Rome because they wished to see their own interests in the Peloponnese secured. Megalopolitans like Aristaenus and Philopoemen supported Rome during the Aetolian/Syrian War because an Aetolian led "liberation" of Greece would have been detrimental to their interests. When the war was over, Philopoemen's decision to open diplomatic contacts with other Greek states seems to indicate that he wished the Achaean league to gain allies to defend itself against further encroachment, once he had gained all that he could from co-operating with Rome.

This provoked a response from the senate, who seem to have monitored the activities and actions of their subjects in its newly acquired area of influence in the East closely. Roman policy towards the Peloponnese indicates an awareness of the competing interests of both leagues in that region, which they exploited. Initially, Rome used the desire of the Aetolian league to remove the Macedonian presence from the Peloponnese to gain a pretext for intervention in the Greek world. When the Aetolians had served their purpose, Flamininus exploited the desire of the

Megalopolitans to secure control over the Peloponnese by removing the threat that they faced from Nabis and the Aetolian league.

It is in this context that Callicrates' actions should be seen. The Romans could not have maintained the fiction that they were liberators had they intervened directly. Instead they exploited existing tensions within the Peloponnese to ensure that the area remained under the control of a compliant elite that needed their support. Callicrates' behaviour before the senate was not a betrayal of Hellenic interests and surrender to Rome. Rather, Callicrates, like Greek politicians from the time of the Aetolian league's alliance with Rome in 212/211BC appears to have co-operated with and supported Rome to secure his regional interests.



## Chapter Seven

### Polybius, the Peloponnese and resistance to Rome

#### Introduction

Rome's defeat of Antiochus in 188BC consolidated its control over the Greek world. In the resulting peace treaty the Aetolian league was made subordinate to Rome.<sup>1</sup> Seventeen years intervened before Rome again campaigned in the east, a period seen as one of comparative neglect of Greek affairs by the Romans.<sup>2</sup>

According to Polybius, the Third Macedonian War was caused by the preparations made by the Antigonids to lead a war of liberation against Rome. Polybius states that before his death in 179BC, Philip V was preparing for war against Rome, and that Perseus was continuing his father's policy.<sup>3</sup> With the exception of Pédech, most scholars discount Polybius' assertion of Macedonian responsibility for this conflict, arguing that it was Rome's decision to initiate the conflict.<sup>4</sup> Harris suggests Polybius blamed the Macedonian kings for the outbreak of war because:

*He deeply regretted the war and the end of the precarious political equilibrium in which the Greeks had lived since 189BC. He found himself with the impossible choice of*

---

<sup>1</sup> Harris (1979) p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Harris (1979) p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> Polyb.22.18.10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Pédech (1964) p. 139.

*blaming Perseus or the senate. Perseus had not behaved at all belligerently towards Rome, as Polybius knew; yet the historian could not write, by the late 140s could probably not even allow himself to think, that the senate had purposefully destroyed the equilibrium.*<sup>5</sup>

Polybius' claims of Macedonian responsibility for the outbreak of Third Macedonian War were, as Harris earlier stated, understandable, because:

*How could the pro-Roman political agent in the tragic Greece of the late 140s admit that it was the Romans who had upset the tolerable equilibrium of the years before the Third Macedonian War?*<sup>6</sup>

Polybius does state that initially Philip V, and later Perseus, was preparing for war against Rome; he was actively involved in Greek politics during this period: his assertion should not be discounted. As Harris admitted, the state of the evidence is such that we have only a partial glimpse of it, and Polybius may have expounded his theory about Macedonian responsibility in book twenty-seven.<sup>7</sup>

We do know certain things. Firstly, whatever Polybius' motivation in writing his histories, we have them because he had been detained in Italy in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian

---

<sup>5</sup> Harris (1979) pp.227-8.

<sup>6</sup> Harris (1979) p. 115.

<sup>7</sup> Harris (1979) p.115



War. That is undisputed, though why the Romans felt it necessary to detain Polybius is left unsaid. Polybius' account of why he was detained is preserved in fragmentary form, leaving us with Pausanias, who appears to have confused Polybius' account of his detention with Roman practice in his own day. Did the Romans detain Polybius, along with a thousand other hostages from the Achaean league, and retain them in Italy for sixteen years, merely at Callicrates' prompting, as Polybius and Pausanias suggest? Although it is tempting to suppose that the events of 146BC led to Polybius becoming pro-Roman, even some of those who suggest this acknowledge that he felt a profound anxiety about the course of events in the years leading to the destruction of Corinth.<sup>8</sup>

As Kallet-Marx has recently demonstrated, the Achaean War of 146BC was not the decisive break that it had been previously thought since there is little evidence of any change in Greece in its aftermath.<sup>9</sup> The contention that Polybius became pro-Roman is partly based on the belief that socio-economic

---

<sup>8</sup> See especially Walbank (1972) pp. 166-83, who traces the development of Polybius' attitude towards Rome, from a cautious anti-Roman position before his detention into a cynical and detached one during his period in detention, until the events of 146BC led to him embracing the Roman cause. Other scholars, notably Green (1990) pp.279-81 accept Walbank's view. Walbank's view has not gone unchallenged, see Ferrary (1988) p. 327-34 and Eckstein (1995) p. 232. For a recent re-appraisal of events after 146BC see Kallet-Marx (1995) pp.129-53.

<sup>9</sup> Kallet-Marx (1996) p. 2. As he points out on p.61, "No evidence collaborates Pausanias' bland assertion of the levying of tribute upon Greece in 146BC".



issues played an important role in the events surrounding Corinth's destruction, and that Polybius co-operated with and accepted Roman rule because he feared the consequences of a breakdown in social order.<sup>10</sup> It cannot be doubted that Polybius claimed to have assisted the Romans in their settlement of Greek affairs in the aftermath of Corinth's destruction. However, co-operation with an imperial regime does not necessarily imply acceptance of it.<sup>11</sup> As Polybius stated about his own behaviour after Corinth's destruction:

*In times of danger it is true those who are Greek should help the Greeks in every way, by active support, by cloaking faults and by trying to appease the anger of the ruling power, as I myself actually did at the time of the occurrences; but the literary record of the events meant for posterity should be kept free from any taint of falsehood, so that instead of the ears of readers being titillated for the present, their minds may be reformed in order to avoid their falling more than once into the same error.*<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> For the existence of inscriptions from Megalopolis and Acacesium in Arcadia thanking Polybius for his help against Roman vengeance, see Paus. 8.37.2 and 8.30.8.

<sup>11</sup> As Eckstein points out, Polybius' condemnation of the actions of the leaders of the Achaean revolt show not that he disapproved of their actions. Rather that he was critical of their inability, once they had provoked the war, to prosecute it efficiently, a criticism he also applies to his account of the actions of Antiochus and Perseus. See Eckstein (1995) p. 220 for the Achaean leadership, pp.213-14 for Antiochus and pp. 215-16 for Perseus.

<sup>12</sup> Polyb.38.4.7-8.

In book six of his histories Polybius stresses the role that the suspension of *anacyclosis* in the Roman system of government played in allowing it to achieve control over the Mediterranean world. However *anacyclosis* had not been suspended in other systems of government; Polybius had to present to his readers the decline that had taken place elsewhere, especially in the Achaean league, which had allowed the Romans to achieve their mastery over the Mediterranean world. Polybius believed that *tyche* was changeable and, although it had benefited Rome during its rise to dominance, eventually this situation would be reversed. The final image that Polybius presented to his Greek readership, that of Roman soldiers using works of art for board games, came at the end of his depiction of a steady decline in Roman behaviour post-Pydna. Perhaps he was implying to his readers that *anacyclosis* had resumed and that the Romans were reverting to their true barbarian selves.<sup>13</sup> Although the destruction of Corinth was undoubtedly intended as a psychological measure by the Romans to intimidate their subjects, it does not appear to have ended Greek hopes for future freedom from Roman domination, or to have changed the situation in Greece. On the contrary, the experience in other societies subject to imperial rule indicates that although colonies can remain peaceful for long periods of time, this does not imply

---

<sup>13</sup> Polyb.39.2.1-3. See Erskine (2000) pp.181-2 for the barbarian characteristics in Polybius depiction of Roman behaviour during the sacking of cities.



that their inhabitants accept the status quo.<sup>14</sup> Rather that resentment over the initial conquest lingers, manifesting itself at an opportune moment. As Golan has argued, Polybius' emphasis on the unity of the Achaean league might well have been to educate a future generation that would live in a Greece that was free from Roman domination, since:

*Polybius wished to give the youth of Greece the experience of action and inaction which he had observed and studied: for those young men would sooner or later carry on a more fortunate life than his own, and have the opportunity to develop an uninterrupted political career in a free Achaea (and Greece).*<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Because of Rhodesian UDI, Zimbabwe was one of only four European colonies in sub-Saharan Africa to have a war of independence, and the only one whose society anthropologists could examine to gauge African attitudes towards the conflict in relative safety; they found that many of their preconceptions were mistaken. Firstly, the issue that had played the vital role in mobilising African support for the war was not white rule as such, but rather the land seizures carried out by Europeans at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another factor found was the extent to which the independence movement stressed the continuation between their own campaign and the earlier revolt against white rule in 1896. The liberation war of the 1970s is called the Second *Chimurenga*, the First being the revolt of 1896; the term Third *Chimurenga* being used to describe Zimbabwe's present difficulties by the government. Though between 1896 and 1972 Rhodesia was peaceful, African resentment at actions carried out in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century lingered, resulting in open revolt against white rule when conditions were right. See Ranger (1985) pp. 113-78.

<sup>15</sup> Golan (1995) p.7.



Again, one must return to the notion of *anacyclosis*; Polybius believed that constitutional development occurred in cycles, and he implies in his account of the Roman system of government that internal forces within the Roman republic, combined with external pressure, would cause its eventual decline.<sup>16</sup> Polybius emphasises the madness and irrationality of both the mob at the Achaean assembly and the leadership of the Achaean league in his account of Corinth's destruction in 146BC; an emphasis that has been taken as evidence of a socio-economic basis for this revolt. However, this was the sort of behaviour that Polybius, in book six, claimed existed at the end of the cycle of *anacyclosis* that democracies like the Achaean league were subject to. After Corinth's destruction the cycle of *anacyclosis* would re-start in the Achaean league and its society would be renewed by the emergence of a single strong individual who, Polybius stated, would bring men salvation from the desperate situation they found themselves in. At Rome, along with the internal forces that would lead to its decline, external pressures would impinge on the Roman system of government detrimentally once *anacyclosis* resumed, as indeed the Achaean league had been weakened by increased Roman interference in its affairs after Callicrates' embassy. Polybius wrote his histories to instruct his readership, so that they could learn from past mistakes. In doing so the renewed society that would eventually arise in Greece

---

<sup>16</sup> Polyb.6.57.1-10.

from Corinth's destruction would learn from the mistakes of the past, and be able to assert external pressure on a Roman Republic that was suffering from internal decline.

This chapter will examine resistance to Roman rule in Polybius' histories along with his attitude towards it, especially the role that regional differences in the Peloponnese played in formulating these revolts. Polybius' assertion that Philip V and Perseus were planning a revolt against Rome was probably an accurate reflection of events, especially given Polybius' fellow Megalopolitans' support for renewing the Achaean league's alliance with Macedonia prior to the war. Discontent amongst Megalopolitans like Lycortas and Polybius over Callicrates' settlement of Spartan affairs in 180BC appears to have led them to approach Perseus in an attempt to renew the ties that Megalopolis had with Macedonia. Callicrates appears to have opposed this because having managed to re-assert the position of the original members of the Achaean league by co-operating with Rome, he needed to continue this support to maintain his position.

From there it will look at Roman actions, suggesting that the Romans, aware of the potential threat posed by Megalopolis' links with Macedonia, exploited the situation in the Peloponnese, especially in Elis and Messene, to ensure that the Achaean league was not in a position to support Perseus. I shall contend that Polybius was detained in Italy not through

Callicrates' prompting, but because his actions during the war had caused the Romans to be suspicious. Pausanias' account of the events surrounding Polybius' detention was influenced by Polybius' desire to show *anacyclosis* at work in the Achaean league, by demonstrating how it came under the dominion of corrupt politicians like Callicrates.

As the limited evidence available for the Peloponnese in the period after the Third Macedonian War seems to suggest, Callicrates was by no means dominant. After his death in 149BC and the emergence of a new crisis involving Sparta's membership of the Achaean league, politicians from Megalopolis tried to re-assert the political power of the Arcadian communities within the Achaean league. The Romans, already worried about the situation in Macedonia, intervened to crush any possibility that Andriscus' revolt would spread to the Peloponnese. Polybius marks out the destruction of Corinth for special attention. As he states:

*The thirty-eight book contains the completion of the misfortune of Greece. For though both Greece and her several parts had often met with mischance, yet to none of her former defeats can we more fittingly apply the name of misfortune with all it signifies than to the events of my own time.*<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Polyb.38.1.1.



Polybius wrote with the intention of explaining to his readers how they came to find themselves under Roman rule. It is an inescapable fact that in the early part of his work, in particular his first five books, Romans and the Roman state are described in almost ideal terms, appearing to have many rational, Greek like qualities. In Polybius' account of the Achaean War, the Romans act rationally; it is the behaviour of his fellow Achaeans that Polybius portrays as irrational. However, Polybius' intention was to explain to his readers how they came to be under barbarian rule. By emphasising the ideal nature of the Roman republic during its conquest of Greece, Polybius intention was to show his Greek readers why the Romans had been successful in achieving domination over them. Because of the balance the Romans had achieved in their system of government they were able to overcome Greek states, like the Achaean league, which were coming to the end of their cycle of *anacyclosis*. Therefore, Polybius' emphasis on the mob and anarchy in the events surrounding the Achaean War does not indicate that it had a socio-economic basis. Rather, that he wished to emphasise to his readers that this was the great misfortune that marked the end of the cycle of *anacyclosis* in the Achaean league, after which Greek fortunes could only ascend.

## The Achaean league and the Peloponnese prior to the Third Macedonian War.

From 179 to 175BC there is no mention of the Achaean league in the sources, or the immediate impact of Callicrates' embassy on the Achaean league. Drawing from the limited evidence available, I will suggest that Megalopolitans within the Achaean league, dismayed at Callicrates' settlement at Sparta in 180BC, tried to re-establish links with Macedonia prior to the outbreak of the Third Macedonian War. Callicrates opposed this move because his position, and that of the region in the Peloponnese that he represented, was dependent on Roman support. I will suggest that defining the divide within the Greek elite as one between pro and anti-Roman fails to take into account the differences between the various ethnic groups in the Peloponnese, and how the Romans exploited these divisions.

In 175BC Livy records an approach from Perseus to the Achaean league, the first mention we have of the situation in the Peloponnese after Callicrates' embassy.<sup>18</sup> According to Livy, Perseus wrote to the Achaean assembly requesting that the law that forbade Macedonians entry to the Achaean league be revoked and that *philia* between the two be renewed. In return, Perseus offered to return to their owners all the escaped slaves from the Achaean league that had fled to Macedonia.<sup>19</sup> There

---

<sup>18</sup> Livy. 41.23.ff

<sup>19</sup> Livy.41.23.2-3.



were probably few Macedonians who had been excluded from the Peloponnese, and few escaped slaves from the Achaean league living in Macedonia.<sup>20</sup> It appears that Perseus was trying to renew the alliance formed between the Achaean league and Macedonia in the aftermath of the Cleomenic War. Of particular interest are the speeches in favour of accepting Perseus' offer by Archon, a Megalopolitan closely associated with Lycortas and Polybius, and that against by Callicrates.

According to Livy, Callicrates argued that revoking the law forbidding Macedonian entry into the Achaean league would violate the relationship with Rome. He goes on to argue that Perseus was set on provoking war with Rome since he had recently conquered Dolopia and had marched through Thessaly. The latter point is what Callicrates found the most objectionable. As he points out, the possibility existed that Perseus was preparing the ground for a revolt against Rome and his fear was that:

*We may soon find Macedonian armies and even the king himself, crossing from Delphi to the Peloponnese and that we may be involved with the Macedonians as they take up arms against the Romans.*<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> When exactly the law forbidding Macedonians to enter the Achaean league was passed is unknown. Aymard (1938) p. 112 and Gruen (1984) p. 500 suggest 198BC.

<sup>21</sup> Livy.41.23.16.



Gruen accuses Callicrates of using scare tactics in predicting war, though, as he admits, there seems to be little evidence of Roman pressure.<sup>22</sup> Assuming that Livy left the speech largely unaltered it probably reflects Polybius' account. Given the long association that Megalopolis had with Macedonia, Callicrates may have felt that the possibility existed that Arcadian communities within the Achaean league like Megalopolis might seek to use Macedonian support to undermine the position that he had gained in the Achaean league. His support for Rome may have been due to his need to counteract this possibility.

Archon's speech in favour of accepting Perseus' approach probably gives an accurate impression of the beliefs held by Polybius and other Megalopolitans at this time. Although Archon stated that there was no evidence of war breaking out between Macedonia and Rome, and that he is not arguing against the Achaean league's alliance with Rome, his attitude towards Rome was hostile. Archon, countering the arguments that Callicrates had made, pointed out that the Dolopians were the weakest of all people and that the Achaean league was not as vulnerable as they were. Archon directs his audience's attention to the changed circumstances they faced, informing them that Rome no longer supported the Achaean league as it once did. As he states, if Macedonia did, as Callicrates suggested, attack:

---

<sup>22</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 501

*We have no more claim on the Romans, no higher standing with them, we who have always been their allies and friends, than the Aetolians who were only a short time ago their enemies.*<sup>23</sup>

This hardly represents the feelings of a reliable ally. Archon continues by reminding his audience of why the Achaean league had abandoned its alliance with Macedonia in 198BC; as he points out, the Antigonid kingdom and the Achaean league were longstanding allies, and:

*The services rendered to us by former kings of Macedonia were so great as to wipe out any wrongs inflicted by Philip. If there were such, especially as he is now dead.*<sup>24</sup>

He continues by reminding his audience of the reason they debated for so long in Sicyon in 198BC about abandoning the alliance with the Antigonids, although there was a Roman fleet at anchor nearby:

*There was no immediate threat from the Romans to persuade us; there was still something certainly, which caused such prolonged discussion; and that thing was the ancient association with Macedonia, and the great services by their kings to us in past times.*<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Livy.41.24.9.

<sup>24</sup> Livy.41.24.12.

<sup>25</sup> Livy.41.24.15.



Archon clearly wished to renew the alliance with Macedonia and had the backing, according to Livy, of the Achaean *strategos* Xenarchus. It appears unlikely that Perseus would have made this approach unless he felt that there was a very good chance if it being accepted, therefore the initial approach to renew the alliance may have come from the Peloponnese. Does Archon's willingness to renew the alliance with Macedonia and the arguments he used indicate that this move was anti-Roman, and a sign that he and others within the Achaean league wished to ally with Perseus in a war against Rome?

Again, the question is probably more complex than merely seeing the relationship with Rome as the sole issue dominating the internal affairs of the Achaean league. Megalopolitans like Archon might have sought to renew the alliance with Macedonia but this does not necessarily imply that they would blindly support Perseus in any future conflict with Rome. As Polybius' actions during the Third Macedonian War suggest, although he and other Megalopolitans may have wished to see Perseus emerge victorious from the conflict, they were unwilling to commit themselves openly until it began to look as if Macedonia stood some chance of success.

Perhaps one should consider this approach in the same context as the earlier ones at Megalopolis in 185BC. In the immediate aftermath of the Aetolian/Syrian War the Achaean



league, under Philopoemen's guidance, had decided to renew its alliances with a number of Hellenistic powers. Given the changed circumstances brought about by the advent of Rome in Hellenic affairs, it would appear that Greek states sought to try and widen their diplomatic contacts. The approach from Perseus was not the only one that the Achaean league received in 175BC. In the same year, Antiochus promised the Megalopolitans that he would construct a defensive wall around their *polis* when requested.<sup>26</sup> It would also appear that around the same time, circa 174BC, the Achaean league decided to cancel all the honours that it had awarded to Eumenes of Pergamum. There is no record of when this took place, and the first indication that it happened came in 169BC when Attalus sent a deputation asking for their restoration.<sup>27</sup> Eumenes was a close Roman ally, who during his visit to Rome in 172BC warned that the Achaean league could be a threat.<sup>28</sup>

Returning to Perseus' approach, should it be taken as a sign that the Arcadian communities within the Achaean league favoured forming an alliance with Macedonia against Rome? According to Livy, the Achaean league refused Perseus' approach not because of Callicrates' arguments, but because the *damiourgi*:

---

<sup>26</sup> Livy.41.20.6.

<sup>27</sup> Polyb.27.18.1-3.

<sup>28</sup> Livy.42.12.6. The blame for the Achaean decision was placed on two Rhodian judges.

*Resented the idea that Perseus should obtain by means of a letter a few lines long a concession that he had not deemed important enough for a delegation.<sup>29</sup>*

Instead of seeing this affair as evidence of growing differences between the Achaean league and Rome, it should possibly be seen as part of an internal struggle within the Achaean league. Antiochus approached not the Achaean league, but Megalopolis, suggesting that he viewed this *polis* as the key to his Peloponnesian policy. Possibly Callicrates feared that Megalopolitans like Lycortas and Polybius would seek to use Macedonian support to influence events in the Peloponnese to the detriment of his own regional interests.

It would also appear that the Romans were aware of, and exploited the regional differences that existed within the Achaean league to ensure that the Peloponnese remained stable during its confrontation with Perseus. In 172BC, just prior to the Third Macedonian War, a mission consisting of the two Lentuli visited the Achaean league. They were detached from a far larger mission, and were sent to the Peloponnese, where, according to Livy:

*They toured the cities, urging all the communities alike to assist the Romans with the same intense loyalty as they had*

---

<sup>29</sup> Livy.41.24.19.Gruen (1984) p.500 suggests that Perseus hurt the Achaean league's pride.



*shown in the first war against Philip and then in the war against Antiochus.*<sup>30</sup>

The reaction of the Achaean assembly, along with events in Boeotia, gives us some indication of what the Roman intention was. After their tour, the Lentuli went to the Achaean assembly, where Livy tells us that the delegates were:

*Indignant that they, who had supplied every help to the Romans from the outbreak of the Macedonian war, and had in the war been enemies of Philip, should be on the same level as Messene and Elis, who had afterwards borne arms on the side of Antiochus against the Roman people. And having recently been attached to the Achaean league, were complaining that they were handed over to the victorious Achaeans as a prize of war.*<sup>31</sup>

Gruen dismisses this episode as the Achaean league professing its loyalty with a display of petulance.<sup>32</sup> Larsen took a more realistic view, suggesting that that the Romans were encouraging regionalism in the Achaean league.<sup>33</sup> He draws attention to the larger mission, which visited Epirus, Aetolia, Acarnania, and Boeotia that the Lentuli were detached from. In Boeotia, in response to a situation where some members of the Boeotian elite favoured allying with Perseus, the embassy

---

<sup>30</sup> Livy.42.37.7.

<sup>31</sup> Lvy.42.37.8-9.

<sup>32</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 505

<sup>33</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 436.



exploited the differences within the Boeotian league, especially resentment at Theban dominance, declaring that:

*The Romans intended to give the individual cities a chance of deciding their own best interests.*<sup>34</sup>

The visit of the Lentuli to Elis and Messene gives us some indication, both of the situation within the Achaean league, and Roman awareness of and exploitation of regional differences within the Greek world. Flamininus had awarded both of these states to the Achaean league during the Aetolian/Syrian War and Elis in particular had been a close Aetolian ally, both claiming kinship ties with the other. The visit by the Lentuli to these two states suggests that the Romans may have been concerned about the possibility that Arcadian *poleis* like Megalopolis might co-operate with Perseus, and sought to counteract this possibility by exploiting Messenian and Elean dissatisfaction at their membership of the Achaean league.<sup>35</sup>

At the outbreak of war this mission was followed by another, which requested that the Achaean league send a thousand men to garrison Chalcis, a request that Archon agreed to.<sup>36</sup> It would appear that Lycortas and his supporters' attempt to renew links with Macedonia prior to the Third Macedonian War was viewed by the Romans with suspicion, hence the dispatch of

---

<sup>34</sup> As Gruen (1984) p.507 and 513 points out, when hostility arose, the reason for split within Boeotia was often hostility to Thebes rather than fidelity to Rome.

<sup>35</sup> Gruen (1984) p. 506-7 assumes that they only visited Elis and Messene.

<sup>36</sup> Polyb.27.2.11-12. These troops were to hold this position until Roman forces arrived.

the Lentuli. But were these actions, especially the attempt to renew the alliance with Perseus, part of a wider anti-Roman plot, or were they instead motivated by the loss of Arcadian influence in the Peloponnese? Lycortas and his fellow Megalopolitans had dominated the Achaean league from the end of the Cleomenic War until Callicrates' embassy to Rome in 180BC and it would appear that even after Callicrates' mission that Megalopolitans retained an important position within the Achaean league. The events surrounding the restoration of the Spartan exiles had demonstrated to them that in future they would be subject to Rome. In this situation, Polybius and his fellow Megalopolitans may have regarded the possibility of a Macedonian revolt against Rome favourably, but were anxious to ensure that their own position remained intact.

### The Achaean league and the Third Macedonian War.

This section will deal with the policy followed by the Achaean league during the Third Macedonian War, suggesting that the actions taken by Polybius during the war were sympathetic to Perseus. The Achaean league's neutrality during the conflict was due to a reluctance to identify openly with the Macedonian cause until it became apparent that Perseus had a chance of victory. It will consider the debate on Achaean policy that Polybius participated in before he assumed the office of Achaean *hipparch* in 170/169BC, over the policy the Achaean



league should follow during his term in office, along with Polybius' actions during his mission to Marcius Philippus in 169BC. I will suggest that Polybius was sent to assess the situation with a view to supporting Perseus if the circumstances were right. Polybius' sixteen-year detention in Italy was therefore not solely the result of Callicrates' intrigues, but of his actions during this conflict.

On the outbreak of war, the Achaean league remained neutral though a force of fifteen hundred archers was sent to assist the Romans.<sup>37</sup> There was no declaration of war by the Achaean league against Perseus, unlike the situation in 192BC, when the Achaean league had been the first Greek State to declare war on Antiochus; its neutrality was undoubtedly a blow to Roman propaganda efforts. This might explain the subsequent mission of Gaius Popilius and Gnaeus Octavius soon afterwards.<sup>38</sup> After visiting Thebes, they proceeded to the Peloponnese, touring the region in an attempt to gain support for Rome.<sup>39</sup> What is of more interest is their declaration, according to Polybius, in the various places they visited that:

*They knew who were those who were hanging back more than they ought, as well as who were the active and zealous*

---

<sup>37</sup> Livy.42.44.7-8.

<sup>38</sup> Polyb.28.3.1-10.

<sup>39</sup> Polyb.28.3.3.



*men. It was evident that they were just as displeased with the former as with their opponents.*<sup>40</sup>

According to Polybius' account, there was a rumour that the envoys were intent on accusing Lycortas, Archon and Polybius of disloyalty and remaining inactive at the Achaean assembly because they were waiting to see who would emerge victorious. When they arrived at the Achaean assembly at Aegium the Roman envoys failed to make these accusations: Polybius stating that they had no reason to do so.<sup>41</sup>

Would Lycortas and Polybius have supported the Macedonian cause simply because they wished to remove the Romans? Or rather was their primary concern to ensure that after the war, Megalopolitan interests in the Peloponnese were not affected detrimentally? The approach made by Perseus to the Achaean league in 175BC seems to have led the Romans to suspect that Arcadian communities like Megalopolis might declare their support for Perseus at a crucial point in the conflict. The envoy's decision to visit a number of *poleis* individually

---

<sup>40</sup> Polyb.28.3.4. See Walbank (1979) p. 330.

<sup>41</sup> Polyb.28.3.9-10. Errington (1969) p. 209-10 suggests that the intention was to curb any possible threat from the Achaean league, without making any accusation. Larsen (1968) p. 469 suggests that this was guesswork by Polybius. Larsen argued that although the Romans may have mentioned that there was a disloyal group within the Achaean league, they would not have mentioned Polybius by name, since it would be more effective to leave the threat hanging in the air.

suggests that they were trying to gauge the level of support for Rome amongst the various states in the Peloponnese.

A clearer indication of Megalopolitan attitudes towards Rome can be seen in a meeting recorded by Polybius at the beginning of his term of office as *hipparch*, convened to discuss what policies should be followed by the Achaean league in the following year. Present at the meeting were Lycortas, Polybius, Arcesilias and Ariston of Megalopolis, Stratius of Tritaea, Xenon of Patrae and Apollonidas of Sicyon.<sup>42</sup> According to Polybius, Lycortas argued that the Achaean league should remain neutral during the war, since were they to help Rome it would be:

*Disadvantageous to all the Greeks as he foresaw how very strong the victors in the war would be, while he thought it dangerous to act against Rome.*<sup>43</sup>

Apollonidas and Stratius argued that neutrality should be maintained; though those who wished to assist the Romans should be prevented from doing so. Archon in reply suggested that the Achaean league should act:

*As circumstances enjoined, and neither give their enemies any pretext for accusing them, nor allow themselves to be reduced to the same state as Nicander, who, even before*

---

<sup>42</sup> Polyb.28.6.1-9. Presumably the elected officials of the Achaean league.

<sup>43</sup> Polyb.28.6.5.



*he experienced the weight of Roman power, found himself in the utmost distress.*<sup>44</sup>

It was Archon's view that prevailed. However, the decision to remain neutral was based on the understanding that the Achaean league should act as circumstances dictated, and this meeting came shortly after a number of victories by Perseus.<sup>45</sup> Polybius' subsequent embassy to the Roman consul Marcius Philippus in Thessaly, during the latter's preparation for the invasion of Macedonia, gives some indication of why this policy may have been viewed with suspicion by the Romans. Militarily the situation was undecided. Perseus' forces had gained a number of victories, having reached Stratus in Aetolia, where they were forced to retreat due to lack of support.<sup>46</sup> Archon, the Achaean *strategos*, mobilised the Achaean league's army and instructed Polybius to offer its services to the Romans. According to Polybius, Archon had decided on the course of action, "to refute the suspicions and accusations of the Romans by positive actions".<sup>47</sup>

The Achaean embassy went to the Roman army that was encamped at Perrhaebia, between Azorium and Doliche, just as the Romans were about to cross Mt. Olympus.<sup>48</sup> Here, Polybius

---

<sup>44</sup> Polyb.28.6.7-8.

<sup>45</sup> See Livy. 43.18.1-11.

<sup>46</sup> Livy.43.21.6. and 22.11.

<sup>47</sup> Polyb.28.12.1.

<sup>48</sup> Polyb.28.13.1. The exact location is unknown, Walbank (1979) pp.345-6.



decided that the Achaean league's offer of assistance should be delayed because of the critical state of affairs. He and his colleagues accompanied the Roman army during the invasion of Macedonia but did not approach Philippus to offer Achaean assistance until the Roman army had reached Heracleium on the river Apila.<sup>49</sup> During this delay, a considerable time elapsed, and the campaign turned in Rome's favour.<sup>50</sup>

Why did Polybius delay in telling Philippus about the Achaean offer? Walbank suggests that since the Achaean league was committed to co-operating with the Romans, the offer was made in the knowledge that it would not be accepted, thus creating an impression of loyalty.<sup>51</sup> He also suggests that it would have been fulfilled had it been accepted, but that Achaean forces would not have been useful to Rome.<sup>52</sup> Errington draws attention to the internal dimensions of the offer, pointing out that it stole Callicrates' thunder by demonstrating loyalty to Rome.<sup>53</sup> Polybius did delay in making his offer for a considerable period. From his arrival at the Roman camp until he approached Philippus, a considerable time, which Polybius does not fully account for, elapsed.

---

<sup>49</sup> Polyb.28.13.2.

<sup>50</sup> Walbank (1979) p. 343.

<sup>51</sup> Walbank (1979) p. 344.

<sup>52</sup> Walbank (1979) p.344-5

<sup>53</sup> Errington (1969) p.211.

Pédech suggests that Polybius had received secret orders from Archon, instructing him only to make the offer when the Romans were about to win.<sup>54</sup> Walbank discounts this, suggesting that the offer was made in the knowledge it would be rejected. If this was the case, why was it not made when Polybius initially arrived at the Roman camp? If the intention was to create an impression of loyalty, surely an offer prior to the Roman invasion of Macedonia would have been more beneficial to the Achaean league in the post-war period. Why did Polybius wait until Perseus ordered that his treasury at Pella should be thrown into the sea and the dockyards at Thessalonica had been burnt?<sup>55</sup> Offering assistance at that point, especially when it could have been offered earlier, hardly seems likely to create an impression of loyalty.

However, the Roman march into Macedonia was a gamble that was not assured of success. As Livy's narrative points out, the Romans took immense risks in using the route they took, and could have faced defeat. Perseus had also achieved a number of victories in Illyria prior to this.<sup>56</sup> It is possible that Polybius delayed in making his offer of the Achaean league's forces until he could see that the Roman invasion of Macedonia would be successful. Had it failed he and his fellow Megalopolitans would

---

<sup>54</sup> Pédech (1969) p. 257.

<sup>55</sup> Livy.44.10.2.

<sup>56</sup> Polyb.28.13.2.



have perhaps pushed for an alliance between the Achaean league and Macedonia, the foundation for which they had tried to build before the war. Previous Roman missions to the Peloponnese, especially their approach to Elis and Messene before the outbreak of war, seem to show that the Romans were aware of discontent at their presence in the Peloponnese, and sympathy for Macedonia. These missions appear to have been intended to exploit divisions between the various members of the Achaean league to counteract the danger posed by Megalopolitans like Polybius persuading the Achaean league to ally with Perseus at a crucial moment. Polybius' hesitancy in offering Achaean troops to assist Philippus' campaign in Macedonia may have confirmed the suspicions about the loyalty of Polybius and his fellow Megalopolitans that the Romans had before the war.

When Polybius did eventually make his offer to Philippus, he was assured that the assistance of the Achaean league would not be necessary. The other ambassadors returned to the Peloponnese but Polybius remained with the Romans.<sup>57</sup> Eventually he was asked by Philippus to return to the Peloponnese when another Roman commander, Appius Centho requested that the Achaean league send five thousand troops to assist the Romans in Epirus.<sup>58</sup> According to Polybius, Philippus

---

<sup>57</sup> Polyb.28.13.5-6.

<sup>58</sup> Polyb.28.13.7.



asked him to oppose this move but at the debate in the Achaean assembly to approve this request Polybius made no mention of Philippus' request. There is the further problem of how Philippus knew about Centho's request for assistance.<sup>59</sup> Walbank suggests that either Polybius opposed the move because of the links between the Achaean league and Epirus and blamed Philippus from malice, or that his silence indicates a reluctance to get involved in a quarrel between two Romans.<sup>60</sup> Briscoe pointed out that Philippus may actually have wished to place the Achaean league in an awkward position since in 183BC he had told the senate that they should not assist the Achaean league in preventing Messene's defection.<sup>61</sup> Polybius' delay in offering support for the Roman cause may have made the man who had earlier argued against assisting the Achaean league suspicious of Polybius' actions and motivation. It might be that Philippus' request was actually made not to keep Centho idle, but rather to negate the offer of Achaean troops made by Polybius.<sup>62</sup>

Polybius' behaviour and caution should be seen in the context of internal Peloponnesian politics. Although Megalopolitans like Polybius may have favoured a Macedonia victory, their primary concern was to defend their local interests

---

<sup>59</sup> Walbank (1979) p.346 suggests that Centho approached the Achaean assembly at Aegium directly.

<sup>60</sup> Walbank (1979) pp.346-7.

<sup>61</sup> Briscoe (1964) p.70. Polyb.23.9.4ff. See Gruen (1984) p.509.

<sup>62</sup> Polyb.28.13.8.

in the Peloponnese. The Achaean league maintained its links with other Hellenistic states during the conflict, sending envoys to honour the coming of age of Ptolemy and to renew the Achaean league's alliance with Egypt in 169BC.<sup>63</sup>

The renewal of this alliance led to an approach from Egypt in the winter of 169/168BC, requesting military assistance for the war against Antiochus IV and a debate in the Achaean assembly. Polybius and Lycortas supported the dispatch of Achaean forces to Egypt, while Callicrates opposed it.<sup>64</sup> The size of the force to be sent was not that large, consisting of two hundred cavalry and a thousand infantry commanded by Lycortas and Polybius.<sup>65</sup> Callicrates' objection was that Achaean troops should not be sent overseas at that point but should be retained in case the Romans needed them and also that since the war was none of the Achaean league's business it should not intervene.

In reply, Polybius and Lycortas argued that the Roman had already claimed that they had no need for Achaean troops, and it was only a small part of the league's total force. The proposal to dispatch this force was just about to be accepted by the assembly, when a letter arrived from Philippus requesting that the Achaean league assist Rome in making peace between Syria and Egypt. An embassy was sent to accomplish this.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Polyb.28.12.8-9.

<sup>64</sup> Polyb.29.23.1.

<sup>65</sup> Polyb.29.23.5.

<sup>66</sup> Polyb.29.25.7.



Callicrates' objection to this mission is not hard to understand. His objection on the grounds that forces be retained to assist Rome against Perseus does not mean that his policy was total co-operation with Rome; rather that he did not want to see his political foes get the credit for a successful campaign in Egypt. His argument was probably just an excuse.<sup>67</sup> Philippus' role is more interesting. Walbank suggests that he was upholding senatorial policy, conveying the official Roman view as long as the Third Macedonian War was in progress.<sup>68</sup> As the composition of the embassy shows, it heavily reflected Arcadian interests within the Achaean league, and in light of Philopoemen's efforts in 185BC to renew the alliance that the Achaean league had with Egypt, may have appeared detrimental to Roman interests.

The Third Macedonian War ended in Roman victory and as Polybius initially devised his work, this was the point where Rome had completed its conquest of the known world. During the war, the Achaean league had remained neutral. Polybius along with other Megalopolitans appear to have favoured allying with Perseus prior to the war, and it would seem that their preferred outcome would have been a Macedonian victory. As for Callicrates, depicting him as pro-Roman or favourable

---

<sup>67</sup> Gruen (1984) p.510. Deininger (1971) p. 183 n.34 suggests that Callicrates did favour total co-operation with Rome.

<sup>68</sup> Walbank (1979) p. 402 accepted by Gruen (1984) p.510.



towards Rome fails to take into account the situation in the Peloponnese. Just as Philopoemen's actions at Sparta had assisted the Romans at the outbreak of the Aetolian/Syrian War in 192BC, Callicrates seems to have realised that he could best advance the political interests of the region of the Peloponnese he represented by co-operating with Rome. Roman suspicion that Arcadian communities within the Achaean league were sympathetic to Perseus was evident, both before and during the Third Macedonian War; a suspicion that Callicrates appears to have used to gain an advantage over his rivals.

### The aftermath of the Third Macedonian War and Polybius' detention.

This section will deal with the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War, in particular the decision to detain Polybius as a hostage in Italy. I shall argue that the Romans took the decision to detain Polybius because of their belief that he had been disloyal during the war. Furthermore, that Polybius' decision to place the responsibility for his detention solely on Callicrates, was to show his readers the Achaean league's system of polity in decline due to *anacyclosis*' influence on its political institutions, resulting in a once virtuous democracy being dominated by corrupt and dishonest politicians like Callicrates.

After the battle of Pydna, the victor, L. Aemilius Paullus, went on a trip around the Peloponnese, visiting Corinth, Sicyon,

Argos, Epidaurus, Sparta, Megalopolis and Olympia.<sup>69</sup> The purpose of this trip appears to have been sightseeing, and according to Livy:

*He avoided any inquiry about the sentiments of individuals or states in regard to the war with Perseus, to avoid troubling the minds of allies with the apprehensions of any reprisals.*<sup>70</sup>

When he arrived in Amphipolis, Paullus was approached by a number of embassies, including one led by Callicrates.<sup>71</sup> According to Polybius, these groups all worked together for the same end, ridding themselves of their political opponents. Eventually the ten legates came to use these groups to relay their orders.<sup>72</sup> However, the events surrounding Polybius' detention as a hostage are confused since his own account ends at a vital stage and instead we are left with Pausanias' account.

According to Polybius, Callicrates approached Paullus at Amphipolis. However, he claims that because the Romans feared that the Achaean league would not believe Callicrates if they used him to relay their instructions, they sent two legates, Gaius Claudius Pulcher and Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, to the

---

<sup>69</sup> Polyb.30.10.3-6.

<sup>70</sup> Livy.45.28. 6.

<sup>71</sup> Polyb.30.13.3-4. Along with Callicrates, embassies from Boeotia, Acarnania, Epirus and Aetolia approached Paullus.

<sup>72</sup> Polyb.30.13.6-7.



Achaean assembly.<sup>73</sup> As Polybius' account suggests, the legates appear to have been sent to investigate correspondence between Perseus and the Achaean league, though he states that nothing had been found in the Macedonian archive that clearly implicated any Achaean.<sup>74</sup> Some evidence of correspondence between Perseus and the Achaean league was discovered and forwarded to the two legates, but at this point Polybius' account ends.<sup>75</sup>

Pausanias' account states that in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War Callicrates approached the Roman commission sent to settle the affairs of Greece and became friendly with one of its members, described as dishonourable.<sup>76</sup> This legate went to the Achaean assembly and asked that those who had helped Perseus be executed, along with all those who had held office during the period. Xenon, the Achaean *strategos*, objected, arguing that the Achaean league had been loyal to Rome; he offered that those accused be tried either before the Achaean assembly or in Rome.<sup>77</sup> The Roman, according to Pausanias:

---

<sup>73</sup> Polyb.30.13.8-11. Polybius states that these two legates were the two most senior of the ten. As Larsen pointed out, they were actually very junior in status, suggesting that Polybius was trying to inflate his own importance. Larsen (1968) p. 479 n. 3 followed by Walbank (1979) p. 436.

<sup>74</sup> Polyb.30.13.8-11.

<sup>75</sup> Polyb.30.13.11.

<sup>76</sup> Paus. 7.10.7.

<sup>77</sup> Paus.7.10.9.



*Took the pretext offered, and sent for trial before Roman courts all those whom Callicrates accused of supporting Perseus.*<sup>78</sup>

How do we reconcile the two accounts? Firstly there is the question of Pausanias' accuracy. Pausanias was a travel writer, who included historical stories simply to enliven and illustrate his description of sites, since he assumed that his readers were familiar with what he was talking about.<sup>79</sup> There is the question of whether he had read Polybius or not, a topic that divides scholars. According to Meadows, in Pausanias' account of the historiography of Sparta until the end of the reign of Cleomenes III, he appears to have had no knowledge of Polybius' writings, apparently using Aratus' Memoirs instead.<sup>80</sup> Meadows contends that a good deal of the history of the Achaean league recounted by Pausanias at the beginning of book seven clearly did not derive from Polybius.<sup>81</sup> Habicht opposes the view that Pausanias was ignorant of Polybius' writings, pointing out that Pausanias' interest in Greek history stops in 146BC, the point that Polybius chose to end his histories, suggesting that he was familiar with Polybius' works.<sup>82</sup> Pausanias' emphasis on Callicrates' corruption and dishonest nature seems to be in line with Polybius' depiction

---

<sup>78</sup> Paus. 7.10.10.

<sup>79</sup> Habicht (1985) pp.96-7.

<sup>80</sup> Meadows (1995) p. 113.

<sup>81</sup> Meadows (1995) p. 101 n.47.

<sup>82</sup> Habicht (1985) p. 102.

of political leaders who dominate a democracy at the end of the process of *anacyclosis*.

In some respects, the question is not whether Pausanias read Polybius but whether he understood him.<sup>83</sup> The offer made by the Roman legate in Pausanias' account, offering a trial in Rome or in Achaëa, reflects legal practice in the second century AD, the time when Pausanias was writing, where, as Roman citizens, the accused would have had this option. Although Polybius records an embassy sent to Rome asking for the recall of the hostages, it appears that the senate believed that the detainees had already been tried.<sup>84</sup> The purpose of this embassy seems to have been to get clarification of the legal position, the envoys offering to undertake an inquiry into the detainees' actions and to punish those found guilty on Rome's behalf.<sup>85</sup>

Again one must remember the situation in the Peloponnese, and the competing interests of the various ethnic groups within it. Polybius might have been correct in asserting that Callicrates assisted the Romans and probably did denounce him. Given his earlier actions, it would appear that the Romans took the decision to remove Polybius and the other hostages to Italy because they had been sympathetic to Perseus' cause. In the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War the Romans punished

---

<sup>83</sup> Habicht (1985) p. 98 points out that Pausanias was probably writing from memory, hence his mistakes.

<sup>84</sup> Polyb.30.32.2.

<sup>85</sup> Polyb.30.32.5.



any sort of indiscretion that occurred during the conflict. Compared to events in Aetolia where thousands were massacred, their actions in the Peloponnese were comparatively restrained.<sup>86</sup> As for Polybius placing the blame for his detention on Callicrates, it was his intention to show Achaean democracy gradually descending into chaos and anarchy through the workings of *anacyclosis*. Callicrates' dishonest and corrupt behaviour, along with that of the Roman legate who assisted him, present in Pausanias' account, would seem to suggest that possibly Polybius' account of his own exile was a continuation of this theme.

Callicrates' probable denunciation of Polybius and others does not necessarily imply that the Romans were favouring a pro-Roman elite within the Achaean league. The fact that four embassies were dispatched from the Achaean league asking for the release of the detainees would seem to suggest otherwise.<sup>87</sup> If Callicrates played a role in Polybius' detention, it was probably only to confirm suspicions that the Romans already held.

### Internal Achaean politics 167-147BC.

While the hostages were being kept in Rome, Callicrates appears to have been neither slavishly pro-Roman, nor in

---

<sup>86</sup> See Livy.45.28.7. for the massacre. Gruen (1984) p.515 draws attention to the endorsement given to this act by Paullus.

<sup>87</sup> Walbank (1979) p. 455 states that if Callicrates was left in complete control, then the dispatch of these embassies is "strange". See also Larsen (1968) p. 483-4.



complete command of the Achaean league; Megalopolitans such as Thearidas, Polybius' brother, remained politically important.<sup>88</sup> It would appear that regional tensions remained between the various members of the Achaean league, and in 164BC a boundary dispute arose between Sparta and Megalopolis. It appears that both sides appealed to Rome, seeing as a mission sent to the east, led by Gaius Sulpicius Gallus and Manius Sergius, was ordered to resolve the dispute. At this point Polybius' account ends, and Pausanias continues the narrative. This presents a problem, in that Pausanias states that the dispute was between Argos and Sparta.<sup>89</sup> Pausanias appears to have either confused Argos with Megalopolis, or possibly there was another boundary dispute.<sup>90</sup> Pausanias, presumably following Polybius, depicts Gallus' intervention as arrogant; stating that after insulting those involved he ordered Callicrates to resolve the problem.<sup>91</sup> Then, according to Pausanias, Gallus approached the Aetolians at Pleuron who were members of the Achaean league but wished to leave. He ordered them to send an embassy to Rome where permission was granted.<sup>92</sup> The senate then

---

<sup>88</sup> Polyb.32.7.1. SIG<sup>3</sup> 626 states that he was from Megalopolis and had a father called Lycortas and a brother called Polybius.

<sup>89</sup> Paus.7.11.1-2.

<sup>90</sup> Walbank (1979) p. 465 opposes the suggestion that there were two disputes.

<sup>91</sup> Paus.7.12.1.

<sup>92</sup> Paus.7.12.3.

proceeded to order Gallus to separate as many states as he could from the Achaean league.<sup>93</sup>

How accurate is Pausanias' account? Gruen argues that the transfer of the boundary dispute to Callicrates was standard Roman practice, and that the reference in Pausanias to Gallus' arrogant behaviour was derived from Polybius who hated him.<sup>94</sup> A fragmentary inscription from Olympia suggests, according to Gruen, that an Achaean arbitration board gave the ultimate decision, and that the Romans merely affirmed an earlier Greek decision.<sup>95</sup> As for the allegations about Pleuron and the dismemberment of the Achaean league, Gruen denies this actually happened, suggesting that Gallus would have had no desire to prolong his stay in the Peloponnese, since the main thrust of his mission was an investigation of the affairs of Eumenes and Antiochus.<sup>96</sup> Gruen suggests that Pausanias muddled his facts and anticipated events twenty years in the future.<sup>97</sup>

This criticism lacks conviction; though confused, possibly because he was writing from memory, it appears that Pausanias derived his account of this mission from Polybius. The instructions given to Gallus by the senate before he set out on his

---

<sup>93</sup> Paus.7.12.3.

<sup>94</sup> Gruen (1976) p.50

<sup>95</sup> SIG<sup>3</sup> 665 lines 42-50.

<sup>96</sup> Polyb.31.1.6-8.

<sup>97</sup> Gruen (1976) p.51.



mission were to inquire diligently into the actions of Antiochus and Eumenes in case they were making any preparations to attack Rome in concert.<sup>98</sup> Gallus' actions in the Peloponnese suggest that the Romans were concerned that elements in the Achaean league would assist in a new challenge to Rome's position, and that he was sent to assess the situation. At the very least his actions would seem to suggest that the situation in the Peloponnese was unsettled.

The origin of the Achaean War itself came in 150BC, when Sparta attempted to leave the Achaean league. What type of society Sparta had at this time is open to question.<sup>99</sup> The problem is that virtually nothing is known about Sparta's membership of the Achaean league between 180 and 150BC. The fact that a Spartan, Menalcidas, was elected Achaean *strategos*, seems to suggest that some members of the Spartan elite had reconciled themselves to Sparta's membership of the Achaean league.<sup>100</sup> Despite this, it appears that a desire to regain Spartan independence remained.

According to Pausanias, Menalcidas, during his term as Achaean *strategos*, was bribed by the Oropians to secure his assistance in a dispute they were having with the Athenians. Menalcidas in turn offered Callicrates half of the bribe to secure

---

<sup>98</sup> Polyb.31.1.8.

<sup>99</sup> Shimron (1972) p. 130 suggests that at this time the socio-economic question in Sparta was no different from elsewhere in Greece, and indeed may have been less serious.

<sup>100</sup> Shimron (1972) p.131/132.



his assistance in securing an outcome that was favourable to the Oropians.<sup>101</sup> When the dispute was resolved, Menalcidas refused to give Callicrates his share of the money. Callicrates in retaliation accused Menalcidas of attempting to detach Sparta from the Achaean league when the latter was on an embassy to Rome, a capital charge.<sup>102</sup> So that he would not be brought to trial to face this charge, Menalcidas bribed the new Achaean *strategos*, Diaeus of Megalopolis, to prevent Callicrates taking action against him. However, Diaeus was concerned that he would appear corrupt for accepting a bribe from Menalcidas. According to Pausanias, Diaeus started a boundary dispute with Sparta to divert attention away from his own corruption.

It is unlikely that there was any truth behind these allegations. Pausanias undoubtedly drew this information from Polybius, who wished to emphasise the corrupt nature of the Achaean leadership, so that he could instruct his readers about the affect that *anacyclosis* was having on the Achaean league's system of government. Accepting that there was a dispute within the Achaean elite that was not caused by corruption, why did this crisis spiral out of control? Though it may be tempting to see it as a local squabble, the situation in Macedonia had been disturbed by the rise of Andriscus, a pretender to the Antigonid

---

<sup>101</sup> Paus.7.12.1-4.

<sup>102</sup> Paus.7.12.2.

throne, and may explain both the subsequent actions of the Achaean leadership and the harshness of the Roman reaction.<sup>103</sup>

The Roman response to Andriscus' revolt was to send Scipio Nasica to investigate.<sup>104</sup> Prior to Scipio's arrival, the Thessalians had appealed to the Achaean league for assistance when Andriscus attacked them.<sup>105</sup> Scipio took command of the Greek forces and drove Andriscus out of Thessaly. However, Andriscus remained in control of Macedonia, so a Praetor, Publius Juventius, was sent along with a legion to bring the situation under control, but was defeated.<sup>106</sup> Andriscus then re-invaded Thessaly, and the revolt became a serious threat to the Rome's position, especially since Andriscus enjoyed widespread popular support, Polybius stating that the people fought for him with greater enthusiasm than they had fought for the real Antigonid kings.<sup>107</sup> As a result, in 148BC, Q. Caecilius Metellus was sent to crush the revolt.<sup>108</sup>

Events in Macedonia are important for understanding the background to the Achaean War. Simultaneous trouble in Macedonia and the Peloponnese may have raised Roman fears about the possibility that Diaeus would renew the traditional ties

---

<sup>103</sup> Polyb.36.10.1-7.

<sup>104</sup> Zonaras 9.28. See Larsen (1968) p.488.

<sup>105</sup> Polyb.36.10.6.

<sup>106</sup> Florus.I.30.5.

<sup>107</sup> Polyb.36.17.14.

<sup>108</sup> Zonaras 9.28.

that Megalopolis had with Macedonia. Although the Achaean league had earlier provided assistance against Andriscus, after he had defeated a legion, Greeks like Diaeus may have felt that the time had come for a revolt against Roman domination.

It would appear that it was Andriscus' revolt rather than base corruption that caused divisions within the Achaean elite. The three politicians involved all had different interests. Menalcidas was concerned with detaching Sparta from the Achaean league and restoring its independence, and had powerful Roman allies. When Menalcidas was imprisoned in Alexandria in 168BC, he was freed after the intervention of Gaius Popilius.<sup>109</sup> Diaeus represented the traditional anti-Spartan view held by Megalopolitans. As a grandson of Diophanes, a rival of Philopoemen, he was bound to get an unfavourable reaction from Polybius.<sup>110</sup> With the outbreak of Andriscus' revolt, Diaeus may have felt that it was possible to humiliate Sparta by overturning Callicrates' settlement, gaining the prestige that his family had lost to Philopoemen in 191BC. Callicrates probably wished to retain the settlement that he had implemented at Sparta in 180/179BC.

Thus, when Callicrates did bring capital charges against Menalcidas, they had nothing to do with bribery; rather they

---

<sup>109</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 490.

<sup>110</sup> Gruen (1976) p. 54. The two are linked by the fact that Diophanes was a son of Diaeus. At the very least they came from the same family.



were probably brought because Sparta was trying to secede from the Achaean league. Shortly afterwards, Diaeus assumed the office of Achaean *strategos*, and the Spartans appealed to the senate over the territory disputed between itself and Megalopolis. The reply from the senate was that Achaean courts should try all but capital cases.<sup>111</sup> The interpretation placed on this statement by Diaeus was that:

*The senate had committed to them the right to condemn a Spartan to death.*<sup>112</sup>

Diaeus presented the Spartans with a list of twenty-four men whom he claimed had disturbed the peace. His intention in doing so was to gain a pretext for war, since he simultaneously mobilised the Achaean league's army.<sup>113</sup> The Spartans, realising that they could not get a fair trial, appealed to Rome, and the Achaean league sent Diaeus and Callicrates in response, though Callicrates died on the way to Rome.<sup>114</sup> The senate was faced with a return to the situation that had prevailed in the 190s BC, when it had found it necessary to curb Megalopolitan power over the Achaean league. Therefore, they needed to carefully consider the situation before sending the delegation they

---

<sup>111</sup> Paus.7.12.4.

<sup>112</sup> Paus.7.12.4.

<sup>113</sup> Paus.7.12.6-7.

<sup>114</sup> Paus.7.12.8. "I do not know that he would have been of any assistance to the Achaeans; perhaps he would have been the cause of greater trouble".

promised both sides.<sup>115</sup> Diaeus, already aware of Andriscus' revolt in Macedonia, probably heard that the Romans had been defeated by Andriscus while in Rome, which may have prompted him to believe that the Romans would be occupied with events in Macedonia, and would ignore events in the Peloponnese.

As a result, when Diaeus returned to the Peloponnese and approached the Achaean assembly, according to Pausanias he:

*Misled the Achaeans into the belief that the Roman senate had decreed the complete subjection to them of the Lacedaemonians.*<sup>116</sup>

On the other hand, Menalcidas told the Spartans that the Romans had entirely freed them from the Achaean league.<sup>117</sup>

Which one was telling the truth? Gruen argues that it was yet another case of the Romans giving non-committal answers out of indifference.<sup>118</sup> Harris on the other hand suggested that the confusion was intentional.<sup>119</sup> Menalcidas would hardly have said what he did, unless the senate had said, or implied, Sparta would be allowed to leave the Achaean league. It is clear that by this stage the senate had decided that events in the Peloponnese needed to be resolved. The reason that it delayed the dispatch of

---

<sup>115</sup> Paus.7.12.9.

<sup>116</sup> Paus.7.12.9.

<sup>117</sup> Paus.7.12.9.

<sup>118</sup> Gruen (1976) p. 56.

<sup>119</sup> Harris (1979) p. 243.

the mission that they promised, and the contradictory answers given to both the Spartan and Achaean representatives may have been intended to prevent the Achaean league from sending aid to Andriscus.<sup>120</sup>

In the meantime, the Achaean league, encouraged by Diaeus and the new *strategos*, Damocritus of Megalopolis, went to war with Sparta.<sup>121</sup> Metellus, the Roman commander in Macedonia asked a Roman embassy on its way to the east to stop off in the Peloponnese and request that the Achaean league refrain from attacking Sparta until the promised embassy from the senate arrived.<sup>122</sup> The Achaean league ignored this request; Damocritus continued his attacks, quickly defeating the Spartans, though he failed to capture the actual city, confining his forces to plundering the surrounding countryside.<sup>123</sup> Damocritus was fined fifty talents for his failure to capture Sparta, and being unable to pay, was driven into exile, Diaeus replacing him as *strategos*.<sup>124</sup>

Metellus sent another embassy, requesting that the Achaean league refrain from further action against Sparta until the

---

<sup>120</sup> Morgan (1969) p. 434.

<sup>121</sup> Paus. 7.13.1.

<sup>122</sup> Paus. 7.13.2. Gruen (1976) p.56 suggests that Metellus did not want any further trouble in Greece while the situation in Macedonia was unsettled.

<sup>123</sup> Paus. 7.13.3-4.

<sup>124</sup> Paus. 7.13.5. If for any reason a *strategos* was unable to finish his term in office; the previous holder regained it.



promised embassy from the senate arrived. Diaeus agreed to this request, but garrisoned the surrounding towns in the hope of provoking a Spartan response.<sup>125</sup> Menalcidas fell into this trap by attacking the town of Iasus, thus restarting the war.<sup>126</sup> The Spartans were completely defeated and turned on Menalcidas, who was forced to commit suicide.<sup>127</sup>

The background to the Achaean War is important as it gives us some indication of why the Romans may have decided that it was necessary to undertake a campaign against the Achaean league. Although Callicrates' death and the return of the hostages from Rome may have caused this dispute, the emergence of a new generation within Megalopolis' political elite and their traditional hostility towards Sparta was probably responsible. Megalopolis and presumably other Arcadian *poleis* had remained politically important within the structures of the Achaean league, and in the context of Andriscus' revolt, a fear that events there would spread to the Peloponnese must have been a cause of concern to the senate. Despite Roman requests for restraint, Megalopolitans like Diaeus and Damocritus had provoked conflict with Sparta, and the sight of Greek states acting in accordance with their local interests and attempting to change the situation in the Peloponnese was provocative.

---

<sup>125</sup> Paus.7.13.6.

<sup>126</sup> Paus.7.13.7. This town is otherwise unknown, see Frazer (1898) p. 134.

<sup>127</sup> Paus.7.13.8.

Realising that they could no longer control the Peloponnese by proxy the Romans decided to intervene, at the same time turning Macedonia into a province. The result was the embassy of L. Aurelius Orestes.

### Orestes' embassy 147BC.

The senate had originally promised this embassy in 149BC, so when it did eventually arrive there had been a delay of two years.<sup>128</sup> According to Pausanias, when Orestes arrived in Corinth, he asked Diaeus and the magistrates of all the *poleis* who were members of the Achaean league to meet him at his lodgings. There, he told them the senate had decreed that:

*Neither the Lacedaemonians nor yet Corinth itself should belong to the Achaean league, and that Argos, Heracleia by Mt. Otea and the Arcadian Orchomenus should be released from the Achaean league.*<sup>129</sup>

The reason he gave for this decision was that these *poleis* were not originally Achaean. According to Pausanias, this statement caused outrage, provoking an attack on all the Spartans present, even those who took refuge in Orestes' lodgings.<sup>130</sup> Polybius tells us that when Orestes returned to Rome

---

<sup>128</sup> Gruen (1976) p. 58-9 blames this on a lack of direction in senatorial policy. Morgan argued that the delay was due to the situation in Macedonia, the Romans delaying the dispatch of this mission until the situation there was under control.

<sup>129</sup> Paus. 7.14.1.

<sup>130</sup> Paus. 7.14.2-3.

he informed the senate that he and his colleague's lives had been in danger.<sup>131</sup> Polybius accuses Orestes of exaggerating the danger, though the Achaean league did feel it necessary to dispatch an embassy to apologise.<sup>132</sup>

There are similarities between Orestes' request and Roman demands at the beginning of the Third Punic War. Before hostilities broke out, the Carthaginians were asked to destroy their city and move to another site ten miles inland.<sup>133</sup> This request was impossible for them to accept, so they chose war.<sup>134</sup> The order given by Orestes seems to have been intended to provoke a similar reaction. The removal of the *poleis* listed would in reality have destroyed the Achaean league. Nor is there any evidence that any of them, apart from Sparta, wished to leave the Achaean league.<sup>135</sup> Justin states that the embassy was given secret orders before it left Rome to break up the Achaean league, since the Romans were looking for an excuse to provoke war.<sup>136</sup> Although Polybius claims that the reason for the mission was to merely to scare the league into submission, Walbank dismisses this view as patently unconvincing, arguing that the Romans

---

<sup>131</sup> Polyb.38.9.1.

<sup>132</sup> Paus. 7.14.3 and Polyb.38.10.1-2.

<sup>133</sup> Dio.32.6.3.

<sup>134</sup> Harris (1979) pp. 234-40.

<sup>135</sup> Morgan (1969) p. 435-6.

<sup>136</sup> Justin 34.1.1-5.



intended to provoke war.<sup>137</sup> Justin claims that such was the rage of the crowd:

*That they would even have killed the ambassadors of Rome themselves, had not the latter fled in panic when they heard the uproar begin.*<sup>138</sup>

The senate had got the reaction that it wanted. Despite this, war was not immediately declared. Dio suggests that Orestes' embassy was intended to weaken the Achaean league, and it probably did cause splits.<sup>139</sup> Diaeus was determined on war; other Achaean politicians made moves towards conciliation. An embassy led by Thearidas, Polybius' brother, was sent to apologise.<sup>140</sup> With the revolt in Macedonia over, some Achaean politicians probably realised that the Romans would act harshly, and sought to minimise the damage that could be caused. As Morgan pointed out, there was no possible reason for sending Orestes' mission except to break up the Achaean league, although the Romans probably did not expect such a violent reaction to their message.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, a second embassy led by Sextus Julius Caesar was sent, and according to Polybius, was instructed by the senate to:

---

<sup>137</sup> Polyb.38.9.6. Walbank (1979) p. 700. Gruen (1976) p. 60.

<sup>138</sup> Justin 34.1.9.

<sup>139</sup> Dio. Fr.72.1.

<sup>140</sup> Polyb.38.10.1-2. Paus. 7.14.3. See Briscoe (1974) p. 70

<sup>141</sup> Morgan (1969) p. 437.

*Administer a mild censure for what had taken place, and then to beg and instruct the Achaeans not to give further heed in future to those who urged them to the worst courses.*<sup>142</sup>

Polybius states that this was manifest proof that the senate did not want to dissolve the Achaean league. Since the senate made no mention of reversing the terms offered by Orestes, it must be assumed that they were still intent on dissolving the Achaean league.<sup>143</sup> As Polybius admitted, some Achaeans believed that Caesar had been sent because:

*The Romans were playing false, as the fate of Carthage was undecided. This however was not the fact...they thought it fit to alarm the Achaeans and curb their undue arrogance, but by no means wished to go to war with them or proceed to an absolute breach.*<sup>144</sup>

### **Caesar's embassy 147BC.**

Caesar met Thearidas on the way to Rome, and persuaded him to accompany the Roman mission to the Achaean assembly at Aegium where, according to Polybius' account, Caesar barely mentioned the earlier mistreatment of Orestes' mission.<sup>145</sup>

According to Polybius' account, the delegates were divided into

---

<sup>142</sup> Polyb.38.9.4.

<sup>143</sup> Larsen (1968) p.493 and Walbank (1979) p. 700 .

<sup>144</sup> Polybius states that this assertion was untrue. Polyb.38.9.7

three groups, all with differing opinions over what to do. One grouping appears to have been willing to compromise; their stated motivation in accepting the Roman offer was that they had before them the fate that awaited those who opposed Rome.<sup>146</sup> Along with this group, there were those who Polybius describes as the majority. He describes them as having:

*Nothing to say against the just strictness of Sextus, and being obliged to keep silent, yet they remained ill conditioned and demoralised.*<sup>147</sup>

The last group was composed of Diaeus and Critolaus' supporters. According to Polybius they were:

*A deliberate selection from each polis of the worst men, the most wretched and the greatest corrupters of the league.*<sup>148</sup>

Critolaus was the new *strategos*, having replaced Diaeus shortly beforehand.<sup>149</sup> It would appear that the discontent amongst the delegates was not due to socio-economic problems, but rather that they felt it was the opportune moment to act against Rome. Just as Diaeus' earlier actions may have been influenced by the revolt in Macedonia, according to Polybius, this group felt that:

---

<sup>145</sup> Polyb.38.10.3.

<sup>146</sup> Polyb.38.10.6.

<sup>147</sup> Polyb.38.10.7. Fuks (1970) p. 85 argues that these men were the lower class supporters of Diaeus and Critolaus.

<sup>148</sup> Polyb. 38.10.8.

<sup>149</sup> Walbank (1979) p.701.



*The Romans, owing to their campaigns in Africa and Spain were afraid of a war with the Achaeans, and consequently tolerated everything and were ready to say anything.*<sup>150</sup>

This grouping requested that a new meeting should be held at Tegea, at which the Spartans could be present.<sup>151</sup> The meeting was a disaster since the Achaeans under Critolaus failed to turn up, with Critolaus announcing in response to the Roman envoys that he was:

*Not empowered to arrange anything without taking the opinion of the people, but that he would refer the matter to the next assembly that was to meet in six months.*<sup>152</sup>

His intention seems to have been to insult the Romans, and this move made war inevitable<sup>153</sup> Gruen suggests that Critolaus asked the Achaeans not to attend because he feared renewed mob violence.<sup>154</sup> This appears doubtful; Megalopolitan politicians like Critolaus and Diaeus appear to have been determined to force an internal solution to Sparta's membership of the Achaean league without reference to Roman interests. The fact that the Romans were engaged in the Third Punic War, as well as in Spain, may have encouraged them to believe that they would be unable to intervene in the Peloponnese. Along with this, the

---

<sup>150</sup> Polyb.38.10.10

<sup>151</sup> Polyb.38.10.12.

<sup>152</sup> Polyb.38.11.7.

<sup>153</sup> Larsen (1968) p.493.

<sup>154</sup> Gruen (1976) p. 63.

situation in Macedonia was tense since Andriscus had only recently been defeated and another pretender may possibly have emerged.<sup>155</sup> In the light of the links between Megalopolis and Macedonia, along with the popularity that Andriscus' revolt had enjoyed, Critolaus may have felt that the time was ripe for a revolt against Rome.

Caesar returned to Rome, reporting Critolaus' behaviour to the senate, stating that the latter had:

*Acted in a wrong-headed way and like a madman.*<sup>156</sup>

Critolaus then toured the Peloponnese, informing the people of what had happened at Tegea and, according to Polybius:

*Accused the Romans and gave the worst sense to all that they had said.*<sup>157</sup>

### **Socio-economic issues and the Achaean War.**

It is this tour that has led some to suggest that the Achaean War was actually a social revolt. Fuks identified four areas that might be taken as evidence to suggest that the war was a revolt by the lower classes against the Romans and their upper-class allies. In particular he draws attention to the measures taken by

---

<sup>155</sup> Zonaras.9.28.9. Morgan (1969) pp.430-33.

<sup>156</sup> Polyb.38.11.6. Erskine (1990) p. 200, discussing madness in Polybius, argued that Polybius believed at this point that it was madness for the Achaeans to revolt after the Romans had brought peace and order to Greece.

<sup>157</sup> Polyb.37.11.7-9.

the Achaean league regarding the cancellation of debt, the freeing of slaves and the financing of the war effort by the league's elite along with Polybius' depiction of the supporters of the Achaean leadership.<sup>158</sup>

Turning towards the first area identified by Fuks, when touring the Peloponnese, Polybius reports that:

*He (Critolaus) advised the magistrates not to exact payments from debtors or to admit into prisons those arrested for debt, and also to make the enforced contributions permanent; until the war was decided.*<sup>159</sup>

Polybius seems to be trying to create impression that these were private instructions from Critolaus to the local magistrates.<sup>160</sup> As Fuks pointed out, this was an official decision by the league, local officials were not to take into prison private debtors, and loans raised by consortiums for individuals were to be suspended for the duration of the war. This would seem to suggest that this policy was carefully devised not to disturb the social order since neither capital nor interest was to be touched.<sup>161</sup> These measures were only to last for the duration of the war.<sup>162</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> Fuks (1970) pp.78-89. Shimron (1972) p. 133 suggests that it is ironic that by 146BC the Achaeans are the radicals and the Spartans the conservatives.

<sup>159</sup> Polyb.38.11.10.

<sup>160</sup> Fuks (1970) p. 80.

<sup>161</sup> Fuks (1970) see also Walbank (1979) pp.702-3 and Briscoe (1974) p. 70.

<sup>162</sup> Fuks (1970) p.81.



The second area, the freeing of slaves, should be seen in terms of military necessity at a time of extreme crisis. After the Achaean army had been virtually wiped out, Diaeus ordered that:

*All the poleis should set free twelve thousand of such of their home-born and homebred slaves as were in the prime of life and after arming them, send them to Corinth.*<sup>163</sup>

Again Fuks points out that the intention was defensive. The fact that these slaves had to be home-born and bred suggests that they were as close as possible to free citizens.<sup>164</sup> The financial effort of the Achaean elite is also easily explained. According to Polybius, Diaeus:

*Saw that the public exchequers were very badly off in consequence of the war with Sparta, he compelled them to make also special calls and to exact contributions from the wealthier inhabitants, not only from the men, but from women also.*<sup>165</sup>

Fuks points to an inscription from Troizen, which illustrates that these measures were undertaken to aid the league, not as part of any social reform.<sup>166</sup> Such was the enthusiastic response to these measures, that according to Polybius:

---

<sup>163</sup> Polyb.39.15.3-5.

<sup>164</sup> Fuks (1970) pp.81-2.

<sup>165</sup> Polyb.38.15.6.

<sup>166</sup> IG IV.757. Fuks (1970) p.83.

*The women, stripping themselves and their children of their jewellery, had to contribute to this, almost as of a set purpose, to a fund that could only bring destruction on them.*<sup>167</sup>

Fuks suggests that this was voluntary on the part of the women and shows their commitment to the war effort.<sup>168</sup> As for the supporters of the Achaean leadership, from Polybius' depiction of them it has been assumed that Diaeus and Critolaus' supporters were from the lower classes.<sup>169</sup> According to Fuks, the key passage is Polybius' depiction of the crowd at the Achaean assembly, where he says that:

*Never had there been collected such a pack of artisans and common men.*<sup>170</sup>

Fuks suggests that this passage demonstrated that the Achaean leadership were supported by the lower classes, which hoped for social and economic advances from the war.<sup>171</sup> Why Diaeus would have desired to see the lower classes take control over the Achaean league is left unsaid. As he was presumably a man of property himself, there was no reason for him to hope for

---

<sup>167</sup> Polyb.38.15.11.

<sup>168</sup> Fuks (1970) p p.83-84. Walbank (1979) p. 712 agrees that it may be voluntary, but adds that since Polybius mention it in the context of official pressure, that it may mean that the women had to sell their jewels in order to meet the official assessment.

<sup>169</sup> Fuks (1970) p. 84.

<sup>170</sup> Polyb.38.12.5.

<sup>171</sup> Fuks (1970). 85-6.

social upheaval. Although the leaders of revolutionary movements are often members of the elite, it does not appear that Diaeus was concerned with undertaking a socio-economic revolution.

### The Achaean War 146BC

After the Achaeans had rejected the last chance offered to them by Caesar's embassy the senate responded by sending the consul elected for that year, Mummius, with a fleet and an army to the Peloponnese.<sup>172</sup>

Despite the preparations for war by both sides, Metellus sent four legates to the Achaean assembly at Corinth since, according to Pausanias, he hoped to win the war without any assistance.<sup>173</sup> Critolaus had already toured the Peloponnese, stirring up the people there. Thus, when Metellus' legates arrived in Corinth they received a hostile reception.<sup>174</sup> Which group encouraged Metellus' belief that there was a peace party is unknown. Stratius, the only detainee known by name apart from Polybius admitted to being in contact with these legates, along with Euagoras of Aegium.<sup>175</sup> According to Polybius, Critolaus stated that:

---

<sup>172</sup> Paus.7.15.11.

<sup>173</sup> Polyb.38.12.1. According to Paus.7.15.2. at the same time he led his army down to the Gulf of Lamia

<sup>174</sup> Polyb.38.12.4.

<sup>175</sup> Polyb.38.13.4..



*We should not so much fear the Spartans or the Romans, as those among ourselves who are co-operating with the enemy.*<sup>176</sup>

Critolaus persuaded the Achaean assembly to declare war on Sparta, though as Polybius says it was in reality a declaration of war against Rome.<sup>177</sup> Metellus had already led his army towards the Peloponnese while the legates were in Corinth, so strategic surprise by the Achaeans was impossible. Critolaus seemed aware that the Romans had usually advanced into Greece by land so he sent the league's army to Heraclea, which was trying to cede from the league.<sup>178</sup> Metellus surprised it, and the Achaean army was forced to retreat.<sup>179</sup> Metellus pursued the retreating Achaean army to Scarphelia, where he destroyed it. Critolaus disappeared after the battle, Pausanias stating that his body was never found; though it probably fell into the nearby marshes.<sup>180</sup>

Diaeus replaced him as *strategos*. With the league's army gone Diaeus was forced to recruit slaves.<sup>181</sup> This gave him fourteen thousand men, four thousand of whom he sent to

---

<sup>176</sup> Polyb.38.13.3.

<sup>177</sup> Polyb.38.13.6.

<sup>178</sup> Larsen (1968) p. 495 postulates that its proximity to Thermopylae suggests that the Achaean league thought that if it could hold this position against Metellus it might have a chance.

<sup>179</sup> Paus.7.15.3.

<sup>180</sup> Paus.7.15.4.

Megara to defend the Isthmus. The Achaean army was forced back to Corinth when the Romans approached.<sup>182</sup>

Metellus then offered the Achaean league a chance to surrender before Mummius' arrival, possibly because he wanted the credit for this campaign.<sup>183</sup> Andronidas, a supporter of Callicrates, was sent to negotiate, and returned with terms which, we are informed by Polybius, Stratius a former Roman detainee begged Diaeus to accept, being supported by the *hypostrategos* Sosicrates, who was tortured for suggesting surrender. Diaeus decided to fight on.<sup>184</sup>

With Mummius' arrival, Metellus retired to Macedonia.<sup>185</sup> A battle was fought on the Isthmus where the Achaean army was completely defeated.<sup>186</sup> Diaeus fled to Megalopolis, where he killed his wife and committed suicide.<sup>187</sup> Corinth was left undefended, most of its inhabitants fleeing in terror. After waiting three days, Mummius stormed the city, razing it to the ground and looting a large number of works of art in the process.<sup>188</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> Polyb.38.15.1. Paus.7.15.7.

<sup>182</sup> Paus.7.15.10.

<sup>183</sup> Paus.7.15.11.

<sup>184</sup> Polyb.38.17.1-18.1.

<sup>185</sup> Paus. 7.16.1. describes Mummius' force, which also contained Greek contingents.

<sup>186</sup> Paus.7.16.3.

<sup>187</sup> Paus.7.16.6.

<sup>188</sup> Polyb.39.22, Paus.7.16.7-9, Justin 34.6, Livy Epit 42. The destruction of Corinth is a famous episode, though why the Romans chose Corinth in particular for punishment,



Polybius, *tarache* and *anacyclosis*. The Achaean league and the Peloponnese after 146BC.

What happened in the Peloponnese after 146BC is virtually unknown. Polybius tells us that the Romans sent out ten commissioners to settle the region and that he was asked to help them on his return from Carthage.<sup>189</sup> Pausanias states that a tribute was imposed on Greece and that all the federal leagues were abolished for a short time, although they were quickly restored. However, they were not restored on the model that had existed before 146BC. As Pausanias states:

*Down to my day a Roman governor has been sent to the country.*<sup>190</sup>

Apart from this passage very little is known about the Peloponnese until Mithridates' invasion. Polybius, by his own admission, helped the Romans in their settlement of the

---

especially as the leaders of the revolt were all Megalopolitans, is unknown. Possibly its position on the Isthmus, linking the Peloponnese with the rest of Greece, indicates that it was intended to serve as a warning to the Greeks as to what fate befell those who rebelled against Rome. Purcell (1995) p. 138 draws attention to the connections between the sack of Corinth and Carthage, and mentions the claim in the Aeneid that the sack of Corinth was Rome's revenge for the sack of Troy.

Strabo 10.486 states that Delos, an important centre for Roman *negotiatores*, benefited from Corinth's destruction and it has been plausibly suggested that they may have exercised some influence in the decision to destroy it. See Harris (1979) pp. 98-99.

<sup>189</sup> Polyb.39.4-5.

<sup>190</sup> Paus.7.16.9-10.



Peloponnese after the Achaean War. Polybius' co-operation with the Roman settlement, his critical attitude towards the leadership of the Achaean league, along with his emphasis on the madness and irrationality of the mob at the Achaean assembly, has led to an assumption that Corinth's destruction changed his attitude towards Rome's presence in Greece into acceptance.

However, one of the most important documents that survives from this period, a letter from the proconsul Quintus Fabius to the citizens of Dyme, dealing with a case of arson there, has recently been re-appraised, challenging prevailing attitudes about the situation in Greece in the aftermath of the Achaean War.<sup>191</sup> Previously it was believed that this document dated from 115BC, but a new version of the text suggests that it should definitely be dated to the period immediately after the Achaean War, around 144BC.<sup>192</sup> How this piece of evidence should be interpreted has also caused problems. When it was thought that the document dated from 115BC, most commentators saw it as evidence that Roman commanders in Macedonia exercised close control over Greece from the time of the Achaean War.<sup>193</sup> It was also taken as evidence to support the contention that the Romans were seeking to suppress democratic

---

<sup>191</sup> Sherk RDGE no.42. SIG<sup>3</sup> 684.

<sup>192</sup> See Ferrary (1988) pp.189-99 and Kallet-Marx (1995) pp.141-43.

<sup>193</sup> Kallet-Marx (1995) p.129. For an example of the earlier view, see Gruen (1984) p. 524.

regimes in Greece in favour of oligarchies because they were concerned about socio-economic problems.<sup>194</sup>

The new version of the text suggests that what took place at Dyme should be dated much earlier and was in reality a continuation of the Achaean War. The very fact that Fabius does not describe the events that took place in this *polis* as a *stasis*, would suggest, according to Kallet-Marx, that those involved in the arson mentioned in the inscription were not motivated by socio-economic factors.<sup>195</sup> As Kallet-Marx points out in his reconstruction of the text, there is no reference to the destruction of records pertaining to debts in the fire, simply to the destruction of laws.<sup>196</sup> Nor were those responsible from the lower classes. On the contrary, they both appear to have held the office of *nomographoi*, suggesting that the arsonists were members of the local elite.<sup>197</sup> As Kallet-Marx contends, the arsonists intention was to incite the local population to revolt, and as he points out, during the Jewish revolt of 66AD, the archives in Jerusalem were burnt to attract the support of the poor, though the revolt always remained nationalistic. As he points out about the arson in Jerusalem:

*Had we known no more about this event than we do about the Dyme incident, we might have concluded swiftly and*

---

<sup>194</sup> Fuks (1972) pp.21-7.

<sup>195</sup> Kallet-Marx (1995) pp.131-2.

<sup>196</sup> Kallet-Marx (1995) p. 136.

<sup>197</sup> This appears to have been a local, not a federal office, Kallet-Marx (1995) p. 137.



*with utter confidence that the uprising was in essence a debtors uprising against the rich.*<sup>198</sup>

Dyme had a long history of animosity towards the Romans. During the First Macedonian War its citizens were about to be sold into slavery by the Romans until they were saved by Philip V, and in 198BC, along with delegates from Megalopolis and Argos, they left the Achaean assembly in protest over the decision to ally with Rome.<sup>199</sup>

The question is what sort of constitution was being restored by Fabius? When the inscription was dated to 115BC it was believed that it referred to the federal leagues that Pausanias stated the Romans allowed the Greeks to form.<sup>200</sup> An acceptance of Kallet-Marx's proposed new date would seem to suggest that the events in Dyme were in reality associated with Greek resistance to the settlement imposed by Mummius in the immediate aftermath of the Achaean War.<sup>201</sup> This would seem to indicate, as Ferrary, who previously suggested that the inscription should be dated to around 144BC, argued, towards a restoration of traditional political structures in Greece in the aftermath of the Achaean War. As Ferrary points out, Fabius seems to be trying to continue the fiction of Rome as the liberator of Greece. He contends that since the perpetrators of the arson

---

<sup>198</sup> See Jos. BJ.2.427 for events in Jerusalem. Kallet-Marx (1995) p.150.

<sup>199</sup> Livy.32.22.10. Paus.7.17.5.

<sup>200</sup> Paus.7.16.10.

<sup>201</sup> Polyb.39.5.3.



were associated with the recent leaders of the Achaean league, the Romans were claiming to have liberated the citizens of Dyme from their tyranny. Ferrary suggests that *poleis* like Dyme returned to the independent status that they had before the foundation of the Achaean league, as was stated Roman policy before the Achaean War.<sup>202</sup>

What this inscription tells us about the nature of Roman control in Greece is more revealing. Fabius was probably given the task of settling matters in Greece and ensuring that the settlement was accepted.<sup>203</sup> This was not an unusual action; Flamininus remained in Greece for two years after his defeat of Philip V to settle outstanding matters.<sup>204</sup> Fabius' role was to ensure that Rome's position in the Peloponnese was respected. The initial approach to deal with the arsonists came from a group within Dyme, who were probably members of the local elite willing to co-operate with Rome. What Fabius was trying to do in Dyme was support those who realised that, at that point, Roman domination over Greece was a fact of life, and knew that Rome would not intervene in their local affairs if its position in the Greek world was not threatened. It would appear that at Dyme Fabius was exploiting differences between Greek

---

<sup>202</sup> Ferrary (1988) p. 189-99.

<sup>203</sup> Kallet-Marx (1995) p.145 argues that Polybius probably assisted Fabius but may have over-emphasised his role in the settlement

<sup>204</sup> Kallet-Marx (1995) p. 145. Flamininus defeated Philip V in 196BC, but did not leave Greece until 194BC.

politicians as Romans had done since their alliance with the Aetolian league in 212BC.

It would appear from this re-interpretation of the inscription that the disturbances at Dyme did not have a socio-economic basis, but were rather part of an uprising against Roman control. Should it change our understanding of Polybius' depiction of the events surrounding the Achaean War? Polybius by his own admission co-operated with Fabius in his settlement of the Peloponnese and it is hard to escape the contention that the events of 146BC may have changed his attitude towards Rome into one of compliance. Indeed, Polybius states that he returned to the Peloponnese after the Achaean War, having managed to capitalise on the results of his previous actions, something that was deserved because of his goodwill towards Rome.<sup>205</sup>

However, Polybius' extension to his histories was not merely an afterthought that reflected his experiences in detention. Polybius' intention in writing *prāgmatikê historia* was to demonstrate to his Greek readership how the suspension of *anacyclosis* had affected the Roman system of government, producing the circumstances that had led to Rome achieving domination over the Mediterranean world. However, *anacyclosis* was not unique to the Roman system of government, only its suspension was; the systems of government in all *poleis* were subject to this force, including states that resembled *poleis* like

---

<sup>205</sup> Polyb.39.8.1-2.



the Achaean league. As Polybius states, his intention in extending his histories down to 146BC, explaining the course of events in the period between the battle of Pydna and the destruction of Corinth, an account that is largely missing, was because he believed that it would allow his readers to:

*Be able to see clearly whether the Roman government is acceptable or not, and future generations whether it should be considered to have been worthy of praise and admiration or rather of blame.*<sup>206</sup>

Does this mean that Polybius accepted that Rome was an established presence in the Greek world? The events surrounding Corinth's destruction may have caused him to co-operate with Rome and intercede on behalf of communities that faced Roman retribution. This does not mean that Polybius became pro-Roman. As he stated, when in difficulty Greeks should always assist Greeks.<sup>207</sup> As with so much in his histories, Polybius' ideas about the role that *anacyclosis* played in influencing events may account for his depiction of the actions of the Achaean leadership in 146BC, and give an indication of how Polybius viewed Rome's presence in the Greek world.

Walbank argued that Polybius' intention in his account of the Achaean War, despite his extremely negative and cynical portrayal of Roman behaviour between books thirty-one and

---

<sup>206</sup> Polyb.3.4.1.

<sup>207</sup> Polyb.38.4.7-8.



thirty-three, was to justify Rome's behaviour. Walbank suggests that there is a profound change in Polybius' attitude towards Rome from book thirty-five onwards, a period that Polybius depicts as a time of *tara<sub>3</sub>che*, or internal conflict, throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>208</sup> In Greece corrupt politicians controlled the Achaean league and its assembly was dominated by the mob. Hasdrubal, who Polybius depicts as empty-headed and pompous, displaying his wealth at a time when his people were suffering, ruled Carthage, and in Macedonia the people had rallied to the cause of the false Philip, Andriscus. As for Polybius' depiction of Roman actions, Walbank contends in contrast to his depiction of events elsewhere during this period of *tara<sub>3</sub>che*, that the debate Polybius' records about Hellenic attitudes towards Roman actions at the beginning of the Third Punic War show that he approved of Rome's actions in 146BC.

According to Polybius' account, four opinions about Roman behaviour towards Carthage existed in Greece at that point. Some Greeks argued that the Roman decision to be rid of a menace like Carthage was a wise decision. In opposition to this view there were those who considered that Roman behaviour was undergoing a change for the worse, and that Rome would probably come to the same end as Athens and Sparta, an argument reinforced by those who argued that Rome's action was impious and treacherous. The final argument provided by

---

<sup>208</sup> Walbank (1985) p. 336.

Polybius was that since the Carthaginians had broken their treaty with Masinissa, the Romans were able to do what they liked.<sup>209</sup> Yet, the decision that Polybius presented the Romans as adopting, embarking on a policy that resulted in the total destruction of Carthage, was a decline from earlier standards of Roman behaviour.<sup>210</sup> After Cynoscephalae Polybius presents Flamininus stating that the Romans never destroyed their enemies after a war, and that although brave men ought to press hard on their enemies while fighting, they should also show themselves courageous in defeat, and moderate and humane in victory.<sup>211</sup> The Romans, in deliberately deciding on Carthage's annihilation in 146BC, were acting in a cruel and barbarian fashion.

Walbank contended that ultimately Polybius' stress on *tara: che* in this period was related to his belief that since Rome had by this point become the dominant power in the Mediterranean, any rising against its rule was futile and

---

<sup>209</sup> See Polyb. 36. 9.1-17. Walbank (1985) p.339 contends that the arrangement of the arguments so that those favouring Rome begin and end the debate and the extra space allotted to the pro-Roman argument shows that Polybius favoured this policy.

<sup>210</sup> See Petzold (1969) pp. 62-63 for the argument that Polybius was allying himself with Rome's critics at this point.

<sup>211</sup> See Polyb.18.37.2. Walbank (1985) p.339. While suggesting that Polybius approved of Roman policy at this point, Walbank acknowledges that Polybius was earlier critical of Philip V for destroying Thermon during the Social War and other earlier failures to show mercy and compassion.



meaningless.<sup>212</sup> Should we accept that *tarache* should be seen in this context, especially given Polybius' depiction of the internal corruption in Carthage, Achaea and Macedonia?

Again one should return to Polybius' account of *anacyclosis*, an essential part of the pre-Christian Indo-European belief structure, and given Plato's writings, familiar to Polybius' Greek readership, and its importance throughout his *historia*.<sup>213</sup> As Walbank pointed out, it was only after the destruction of Corinth, at a comparatively late date in the composition of his histories, that Polybius decided to incorporate his account of the evolution of the Achaean league into a single *polis* into his second book.<sup>214</sup> We are left with the question as to whether Polybius' emphasis on the madness and irrationality of the inhabitants of the Achaean league in 146BC was a deliberate device to instruct his Greek readership in the workings of *anacyclosis*. Polybius took what was in reality a failed revolt against Rome, which he depicted as forming part of a wider period of *tarache* around the Mediterranean, and presented it to his readers as marking the end of the cycle of *anacyclosis* in the Achaean league's system of government.

---

<sup>212</sup> Walbank (1985) p. 337.

<sup>213</sup> Polyb.6.5.1. "Perhaps this theory of the natural transformations into each other of the different forms of polity is more elaborately set forth by Plato and certain other Philosophers; but as the arguments are subtle and stated at great length, they are beyond the reach of all but a few". See Plato *Republic* 8.544 and *Laws* 4.712.

<sup>214</sup> Walbank (1985) p.342.



Eckstein suggests that Polybius' criticism of the Achaean leadership and the Achaean people was due to the fact that Polybius believed their actions to be irrational, shameful and disgraceful, suggesting that he was setting up idealistic standards of behaviour that would have been familiar to his aristocratic audience.<sup>215</sup> This is a vast overstatement of the role that socio-economic issues played in the Achaean War. The leadership of the Achaean league did undertake reforms during the war; they were desperate measures to defend the Peloponnese against the Roman onslaught, and were not intended to permanently end social-iniquities in the Peloponnese. The Achaean War was caused by a boundary dispute between Sparta and Megalopolis that spiralled out of control when Diaeus decided to challenge Roman control over Greek affairs; it was not a socio-economic revolt. It is evident, if one examines the Achaean War and the limited evidence for the period leading up to it, that dissatisfaction with the Roman presence in Greece existed. Kallet-Marx's new text of the Dyme inscription indicates that the destruction of Corinth does not appear to have lessened Greek desires to be rid of the Roman control.

Polybius depicted Rome in the initial part of his histories as a state that was at the height of its powers, led during its conquest of the Mediterranean world and long struggle with

---

<sup>215</sup> Eckstein (1995) p .221.

Hannibal in Italy by virtuous men.<sup>216</sup> But as Polybius has Scipio imply when, according to Polybius, they watched Carthage burn together, Rome was not immune from a resumption of *anacyclosis*, and the same fate that befell Carthage, which itself had a mixed system of government at one time, could befall Rome.<sup>217</sup>

Polybius believed that both internal and external forces eventually combined to bring destruction to every *polis*. Polybius stated that although the external forces that played a part in the decline of *poleis* were unknown, eventual internal decline was a regular process, and in his account of events at Carthage and the Achaean league in 146BC, Polybius does portray internal conflict, or *tarache*, in these *poleis*.<sup>218</sup> Moreover, Polybius does describe the onset of internal decline in the Roman Republic in the period before *tarache* took hold elsewhere; the influx of wealth from Macedonia after Pydna leading to extravagance, luxury and the idle parade of riches amongst the Roman youth, with the exception of Scipio. He also describes the senate's

---

<sup>216</sup> This was the point where Polybius believed Rome reached its zenith. See Powell (2001) p. 23.

<sup>217</sup> Polyb.38.21.1-3. Polyb.38.22.1-2 states that while he watched Carthage burn, Scipio quoted Homer. *Il.* 6.448-9, and when questioned by Polybius stated that, "without any attempt at concealment he names his own country for which he feared when he reflected on the fate of all things human. Polybius actually heard him and recalls it in his histories".

<sup>218</sup> Polyb.6.57.2-3.

actions during this period in a deeply cynical fashion.<sup>219</sup> The decision to destroy Carthage in 146BC was a decline from Rome's earlier high-minded behaviour towards those it defeated. Possibly Polybius was indicating to his readership that Rome's decline had already begun.

The Romans had been favoured by *tyche* during the period covered by Polybius' histories, when the fortunes of the Achaean league along with other states around the Mediterranean had become inter-linked with Rome; *anacyclosis* had been suspended in the Roman system of government during their conquest of the Mediterranean world. It had not been in the Achaean league. It is in this context that Polybius' depiction of the events surrounding Corinth's destruction should be seen; his desire to demonstrate to his readers the completion of the internal decline in the Achaean league's democratic system of government which allowed the Romans to achieve mastery of the Mediterranean world. At the beginning of his histories, Polybius announced his intention to explain how and under what system of polity the Romans came to control the entire world.<sup>220</sup> Polybius had to explain to his Greek readership how they found themselves living under Roman rule, and his emphasis on the role of *anacyclosis* and *tyche* in his histories was an attempt to account for this paradox, the rational Greeks finding themselves under

---

<sup>219</sup> Polyb.31.25.3-5.

<sup>220</sup> Polyb.1.1.5.



the irrational rule of the barbarian Romans. Polybius depicts a Roman republic that is strong and virtuous because of the benefits brought about by *anacyclosis*' suspension, precisely at the time when Greece suffers from internal decline. During Rome's advent into the Greek world Macedonia has a ruler like Philip V, who in the lead up to the battle of Cynoscephalae is depicted by Polybius as habitually cruel, treacherous and a promiscuous drunk. His opponent Flamininus is portrayed by Polybius as a highly intelligent young man whom was well-versed in public affairs.<sup>221</sup> Rome was victorious, but only because the balance achieved in its system of government by the disruption of *anacyclosis* produced men of Flamininus' character, while Philip V, despite the promising start to his career, was corrupted into a tyrant.<sup>222</sup>

The Achaean league had a system of polity that was just as liable to the process of *anacyclosis* as the Roman one, a factor Polybius stressed to his readers by inserting an account of its development into book two after the events of 146BC.<sup>223</sup> In his account of the support that the leadership of the Achaean league received in 146BC, especially at the assembly in Corinth that rejected Sextus' offer, Polybius states that when the Roman envoys made their appeal:

---

<sup>221</sup> Eckstein (1995) pp. 183-4.

<sup>222</sup> See for example Polyb.6.7.7. where Philip V shows similar characteristics to a tyrant.

<sup>223</sup> Walbank (1985) p.342.

*The people on listening to them, showed no disposition to comply, but jeered at the delegates, hooted and hustled them out of the meeting. For never had there been collected such a pack of artisans and common men. All the poleis, indeed, were in a drivelling state, but the malady was universal and most fierce in Corinth.*<sup>224</sup>

Polybius in book six describes three stages through which constitutions progressed under the influence of *anacyclosis*. The final one was democracy, the stage that he depicts the Achaean league enjoying, and he claims that democracy eventually ends in mob-rule and anarchy.<sup>225</sup> Then, when after some great disaster has left men weakened, a single strong individual, who brings men together from the state of wretchedness they find themselves in, emerges.<sup>226</sup>

Polybius depicts the destruction of Corinth as the single greatest misfortune to have ever occurred in Greece, exactly the sort of event that he predicted at the end of the cycle of *anacyclosis*.<sup>227</sup> In his account of the events leading up to Corinth's destruction, Polybius emphasises the role of the mob, and the anarchy that prevailed at the Achaean assembly which had fallen under the sway of an irrational leadership. This is exactly the situation he stated would occur at the end of the final stage

---

<sup>224</sup> Polyb.38.12.4-5.

<sup>225</sup> Polyb.6.5.5-9.

<sup>226</sup> Polyb.6.5.5-9.

<sup>227</sup> Polyb.38.1.2.

of *anacyclosis*, when democracy transformed into mob-rule and anarchy.<sup>228</sup> Nor was Polybius' emphasis on the mob as a factor in Achaean politics a recent occurrence. In his account of Callicrates' embassy to Rome in 180BC, the great turning point in the relationship between the Achaean league and Rome, Polybius claimed that Callicrates pointed out to the senate how the mob at the Achaean assembly could be manipulated to increase Roman control over the Achaeans. According to Polybius, Callicrates was only successful in gaining election to the office of Achaean *strategos* on his return from Rome because he resorted to bribery.<sup>229</sup> This accusation has parallels with Polybius' depiction of the situation when democracy transforms in the final stage of *anacyclosis*:

*When a new generation arises and the democracy falls into the hands of the grandchildren of its founders, they have become so accustomed to freedom and equality that they no longer value them...so when they begin to lust for power and cannot obtain it through themselves or their own good qualities, they ruin their estates, tempting and corrupting the people in every way.*<sup>230</sup>

According to Pausanias' account of the origin of the Achaean War, undoubtedly drawn from Polybius, a dispute

---

<sup>228</sup> Polyb.6.9.8-9.

<sup>229</sup> Polyb.24.10.14-15.

<sup>230</sup> Polyb.6.9.5-6.



between the leadership of the Achaean league over the division of a bribe began the process that resulted in the eventual destruction of Corinth and the dissolution of the Achaean league. Similar behaviour occurred when democracy was transformed through the natural cycle of *anacyclosis*, since as Polybius earlier stated:

*For the people, having grown accustomed to feed at the expense of others and to depend for their life on the property of others, as soon as they find a leader who is enterprising but is excluded from the highest office by his penury, institute the rule of violence; and now uniting their forces massacre, banish and plunder, until they degenerate again into perfect savages and find once more a master and monarch.*<sup>231</sup>

Essentially Polybius emphasised the role of the mob in the events surrounding Corinth's destruction not because he wished to show that it was a revolt by the lower classes. Rather his account was intended to demonstrate to his readers the effect of *anacyclosis* in its final stage. Corinth's destruction was not permanent, *tyche* was changeable, and though it had favoured the Romans during their conquest of the Mediterranean world, it would turn again in the favour of the Greeks. Rome was victorious in 146BC, but the only way that its system of government could go was downwards, eventually degenerating

---

<sup>231</sup> Polyb.6.9.8-9.

into anarchy. As for the Achaean league, at least it could sink no lower. Eventually, as Polybius predicted to his readers, a single strong individual would emerge as the cycle of *anacyclosis* resumed. He would bring men salvation from the state that they found themselves in, subjection to Roman rule. In this process he would be assisted by Greek politicians who would have learnt the mistakes that had occurred in the past from Polybius' inquiry into it, and build a society that would be able to place external pressure on a Roman Republic that was suffering from internal decline. When that had occurred, the Achaean league would rise phoenix like from the ashes left from Corinth's destruction.

## Conclusion.

### Polybius, posterity and the limits of literary history

Analytical history has its origins in a series of lectures given by Hegel during his tenure as Professor in the University of Berlin in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kant had earlier argued that the task of historical philosophy was:

*To discover a purpose in nature behind events, and to decide whether it is after all possible to formulate in terms of a definite plan of nature a history of creatures who act without a plan of their own.<sup>1</sup>*

In response to Kant's challenge, Hegel argued to his audience that history was a rational science, and:

*Whoever looks at the world rationally will find that it assumes a rational aspect... The overall content of world history is rational and indeed has to be rational; a divine will rules supreme and is strong enough to determine the overall content. Our aim must be to discern this substance, and to do so; we must bring with us a rational consciousness.<sup>2</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> Kant, *Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (1784), in P.Gardiner (Ed) *Theories of History*, London 1959 p.29.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel " Second draft: The Philosophical History of the World (1830), in *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (Cambridge 1975) pp. 26-30.



According to Hegel, who essentially secularised the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, it was necessary in understanding history to realise that the individual was an organic part of the wider community. Hegel argued that just as we are all born into a single language group, we are also born into a common historical background and, amongst the most important of all the “objective” powers for understanding history that Hegel emphasised were the family, civil society and the state. For Hegel the state was greater than the individual citizen was; it was moreover more than the sum of all its citizens.

Yet Hegel’s assertions about the nature of history have been disputed. Collingwood, the English philosopher of history, doubted that history could be seen in simple, positive terms. He argued that all historical evidence was merely a reflection of “thought”; the most that the historian could do was to reconstruct or re-enact past “thoughts” inevitably under the influence of his own unique experience. Collingwood concluded that a historian’s goal could only be “a knowledge of the present”, and specifically, “how it came to be what it is”. Given that history, as he argued, is an attempt to understand the present by reconstructing its determining conditions, as a science it can only be teleological, because historians can write only from the vantage point, and with the prejudices, of their own present.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Collingwood, R.G. “Lectures on the Philosophy of History. 1926”, in *The idea of History: with Lectures (1926-1928)*, ed. J. van der Dussen, Oxford 1993. pp 363, 412, 420.

As such, present day historians who use a literary source like Polybius to reconstruct events and society during the Hellenistic period are faced with two problems. Firstly they are dealing with a text which was intended not merely to inform, but also to instruct an audience whose society, attitudes and beliefs are far removed from their own. Secondly, it is an undeniable fact that how historians perceive the past and evidence from it has changed throughout the ages. If one takes Polybius as an example, his histories have served a multitude of roles since the time of his re-emergence during the Renaissance, and scholars have interpreted the information he provides in varying ways. During the sixteenth century Polybius was used primarily as a technical authority on military matters. Political theorists from the time of Machiavelli have drawn on Polybius' writings regarding the mixture and balance in the constitution of states for ideas on framing the constitutions of the ideal republic. As Eckstein points out, during the nineteenth century Polybius was frequently mined solely as a source of information about Rome.<sup>4</sup> In some regards this attitude continues to this day, Polybius' sixth book in particular is viewed by some historians merely as a valuable source of information about Roman institutions once his theory of *anacyclosis* has been discarded.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Eckstein (1995) p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Luce (1997) pp. 138-9 who in his discussion of book six remarks that, "When Polybius gets away from the straight jacket of theory, he comes into his own in a quite remarkable way".

Finally along with other ancient writers, notably Plutarch, Polybius is used by historians to reconstruct a picture of the Hellenistic world as a period of immense socio-economic crisis, leading to reforms in Sparta and the eventual destruction of Corinth.

Yet, as Collingwood would argue, Polybius' purpose in writing his histories was ultimately to understand his own present and to instruct his contemporary Greek readership about it, not to provide a picture of the past for future generations; essentially as Collingwood would contend Polybius' writings are testimony rather than evidence. Polybius' stated aim was to explain to his contemporary readers how and under what system of polity Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world had been achieved, by inquiring into the circumstances that had led to Rome's conquest, *anacyclosis*' influence on systems of government all over the Mediterranean. Polybius was attempting to rationalise for a Greek audience something that for many of them was unthinkable, barbarian rule. He did so in an essentially Hegelian fashion, by stressing the importance of the state in historical events, presenting his readership with a picture of how *tyche* had affected the interaction of two states that resembled *poleis*, Rome and the Achaean league.

However, just as Hegel's model for understanding the process of history results in the role of the individual being marginalised, in some respects what becomes marginalised in



Polybius' histories is the individuality of the various peoples of the Peloponnese. Polybius presents a picture of the different *ethne* of the Peloponnese uniting as one *ethnos*, coming to resemble a single *polis*. Given that Polybius' purpose was to explain to his contemporary Greek readership how the reality they faced, that of Roman domination, had come about, perhaps this picture was exaggerated to fit his purpose of explaining this conquest through *tyche* and *anacyclosis*. As such, the extent to which these concepts influenced Polybius' presentation of events needs to be carefully considered by historians today.

From the outset of Polybius' work *anacyclosis* is essential in understanding both his universal approach and subsequent narrative. Polybius argued that the Romans had achieved their success through the agency of *tyche*, a supernatural force that had suspended the process of *anacyclosis* in Rome's system of government at a time when it had been unfavourable to Greek states like the Achaean league. Yet *tyche* was changeable and what had once favoured the Romans would lead to their eventual destruction. Although in the earlier part of his work Polybius describes Roman policy and actions in an extremely favourable light, post-Pydna, his comments on Roman actions and behaviour become increasingly cynical and critical. In Greece he describes a steady decline in the fortunes of the Achaean league, from the period when it could deal with Rome on an equal basis under the leadership of Philopoemen and

Aristaenus until the corruption of politicians like Callicrates and Diaeus. Eventually these two strands come together at Corinth's destruction. At this point the Achaean league had reached the end of its cycle of *anacyclosis*, while in Rome *anacyclosis* was about to resume; Scipio speculating that just as his ancestral home Troy had been destroyed at the hands of Greeks, so might Rome.

The problem facing the present day historian is whether or not the *pragmatikê historia* Polybius wrote should be taken at face value, especially regarding events in the Peloponnese. It cannot be doubted that Polybius' writings do contain valuable evidence; the fact that information he provides can be verified from other sources seems to indicate this. Polybius undoubtedly had, like all historians in antiquity, to use a certain degree of poetic license in recounting speeches made by others; there is no indication that these speeches were anything other than what he sincerely believed to be an accurate reflection of contemporary concerns. That Polybius provides a narrative of historical events, to the best of his ability, should not be questioned.

What should be questioned is the way Polybius presented the evidence he collected. If one takes the entire concept of *imperium*, Polybius' writings, especially his emphasis on the virtuous nature of the Roman republic, has been taken by historians such as Mommsen, Holleaux and Badian as evidence that, although the Romans were aggressive, they were not



consciously so. Admittedly Rome fought many wars, but Polybius' narrative of the first two Punic Wars shows that Rome was essentially defending itself. Indeed, scholars who follow in this school contend that it was only after 148BC, the point where Polybius' histories stop, that Rome became a consciously imperialist power. Other historians, notably Colin and Harris, have used Polybius' writings as a framework for arguing that Rome planned its conquests in a systematic fashion and was from an early stage an imperialistic power that sought to gain mastery over the Mediterranean world.

Possibly the differences between both schools are due to the fact that for Polybius history was not a sterile and neutral account of past events. Rather it was an active investigation of what had gone before which he hoped would provide his readers with lessons from which they could draw hope and inspiration for the future. Polybius wished to explain to his readers how, through the workings of *tyche* and *anacyclosis*, they had become subject to Roman rule; he presented a picture of Greek society and the situation in the Peloponnese that fitted this intention. It must be remembered that Polybius' writings were part of a genre that could trace its origins from the epic and oral traditions; a genre that was also heavily influenced by philosophical concepts.<sup>6</sup> Polybius appears to have found inspiration in his approach to the writing of history from the

---

<sup>6</sup> Polybius cites Homer on no less than fourteen occasions, see Sacks (1981) p. 160.



travels of Odysseus; even Romans such as Cato remarked upon Polybius' own identification with the latter.<sup>7</sup> In this light, the present day reader should approach Polybius' text with some caution.

If one turns towards Polybius' presentation of the Achaean league it cannot be doubted that states in the Peloponnese belonged to some form of political federation during the Hellenistic period. This does not necessarily mean that Polybius' depiction of the Achaean league as a body where the entire Peloponnese united to the extent that it resembled a single *polis*, or his stress on a common Achaean identity, is an accurate depiction of the situation. Rather, Polybius' stress on the Achaean league's utopian unity was perhaps due to his need to show his readership how they had found themselves living under Roman rule, by contrasting the fortunes of its people and their system of polity with those of the people and city of Rome. For example, in the period around the Second Macedonian War, Polybius portrays the Achaean league as a state that under the leadership of Philopoemen and Aristaenus dealt with a Roman Republic whose motives for intervening in Greece were principled on an equal basis. It is doubtful that this happened in

---

<sup>7</sup> Walbank (1972) pp.51-2. Note Polyb. 35.6.4. where Cato makes a joking analogy between the two. However, though it is usually considered as a joking reference to Polybius' identification with Odysseus, it is possible that Cato was drawing Polybius' attention to the fact that the Senate may have been reluctant to release him, and that he should not tempt fate by "pushing his luck".

reality. Yet, if Polybius was to show his readers how the Achaean league declined through the workings of *anacyclosis* after Callicrates' embassy, it was necessary for him to show in an idealised fashion how it had previously interacted with Rome. In assessing Polybius' depiction of the actions of Greek states in the Peloponnese, historians are faced with the possibility that his stress on an essentially artificial Achaean identity might distort our understanding of the events surrounding Rome's conquest of Greece. It is important to remember that Polybius was an inhabitant of a *polis* whose *raison d'être* was to provide a focus for Arcadian resistance to Spartan imperialism. If this is the case, a present day historian is left with the question as to whether Polybius' histories and attitudes towards various states in reality reflect the interests, pre-occupations and prejudices of a Megalopolitan.

It cannot be doubted that Polybius portrays the actions of the Aetolian league and Spartan kings such as Cleomenes and Nabis in the worst of all possible fashions. It is also an inescapable fact that the Aetolians had allies in the Peloponnese and a mythical kinship link with Elis, and furthermore, that both Elis and Sparta were long-standing rivals of Arcadia in Peloponnesian politics. For an Arcadian like Polybius, Aetolian actions such as the destruction of Cynaetha prior to the outbreak of the Social War were acts of mindless violence; they were not to an Elean. Thus, a historian is left to ponder the question of

whether or not Polybius' natural prejudices account for his depiction of events. It would be unfair to accuse Polybius of intending to mislead or misinform his readership; it would in reality be a gross misrepresentation of his intention in writing history. Polybius' histories, intended as they are to instruct, might mislead his present day readers, since they are the writings of a man who wrote and shaped his narrative to provide his contemporaries with the consolation that although the Romans had been successful this time, they would not always be. Indeed as Polybius had pointed out about an earlier incursion by the Celts, history was not merely a means for recording past events; it served a more practical purpose, since as he argued:

*I think history has a special obligation to record such episodes in the drama of tyche and to pass them on to future generations so that those who come after us may not be wholly ignorant of them and may not be confounded by the sudden and unexpected inroads of these barbarians, but instead, having some appreciation of how short-lived and easily repulsed they are, may stand their ground under attack and do everything in their power not to yield to them in any way. For I consider that the writers who recorded and handed down to us the story of the Persian invasion of Greece and the attack of the Gauls on Delphi have made no small contribution to the struggle of the Hellenes for their*



*common liberty. For there is no one who armies of men or abundance of arms or vast resources could frighten into abandoning his last hope, this is to fight to the end for his homeland, if he kept before his eyes what part the unexpected played in events, and bore in mind how many different types of men, what determined resolve and weapons were reduced by the resolve and power of those who faced danger with intelligence and courage.*<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Polyb.2.35.5-8.

## Abbreviations

*ABSA*= Annual of the British School at Athens.

*AJAH*= American Journal of Ancient History.

*AJPH* = American Journal of Philology.

*AncSoc* = Ancient Society.

*ASNP*= Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa.

*BCH* =Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique.

*CPh* =Classical Philology.

*CQ* = Classical Quarterly.

*CR* = Classical Review.

*CRAI*= Comptes rendus de L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.

*GRBS* = Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies.

*JHS*= Journal of Hellenic Studies.

*JRS* = Journal of Roman History.

*LEC*= Les Études Classiques.

*P&P* = Past and Present.

*PCPS* =Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society.

*REG*= Reveu des études grecques.

*SCI*= Scripta Classica Israelica.

*TAPhA*= Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association.

*ZPE*= Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik.

## Bibliography

Africa T.W., *Phylarchus and the Spartan Revolution*. Berkeley, 1961.

Ager, S., *Interstate Arbitration in the Greek World, 337-90BC*.  
Berkeley 1996.

Astin, A.E., *Scipio Aemilianus*. Oxford, 1967.

Anderson, J.K., "Philopoemen's reform of the Achaean army."  
*CPh*52 (1967) pp.104-5.

Antonetti, C., *Les étoliens: Image et religion*. Paris and Besancon,  
1990.

Aymard, A., *Les premiers rapports de Rome et de la confédération  
achaïenne, 198-189 avant J. –C*. Bordeaux, 1938.

Aymard, A., *Les assemblée de la confédération achaïenne: étude  
critique d'institutions et d'histoire*. Bordeaux, 1938.

Badian, E., "The Treaty between Rome and the Achaean league."  
*JRS* 42 (1952) pp.76-80.

Badian, E., *Foreign Clientelae*. Oxford, 1958.



Badian, E., *Studies in Greek and Roman History*. New York, 1964.

Badian, E., and Errington R.M., "A Meeting of the Achaean league (188BC)." *Historia* 14 (1965) pp. 13-17.

Badian, E., *Titus Quinctius Flaminius: Philhellenism and Realpolitik*. Cincinnati, 1970.

Badian, E., "The Family and Early Career of T. Quinctius Flaminius." *JRS* 61 (1971) pp.102-111.

Beloch, J., "Aitolika". *Hermes* 32 (1897) pp. 667-72.

Benecke, H., *Die Seepolitik der Aitoler*. Hamburg, 1934.

Bommeljé, L.S., "Aeolis in Aetolia: Thuc. 3.102.5 and the Origins of the Aetolian *Ethnos*." *Historia* 38 (1988) pp.297-31.

Bommeljé, L.S., and Doorn, P.K., "Transhumance in Aetolia, Central Greece: A Mountain Economy Caught between Storage and Mobility." *Rivista di Studi Liguri* 56 (1991), pp. 81-97.

Bommeljé, L.S., Doorn, P. K., Deylius, M., Vroom, J., Bommeljé, Y., Fagel, R., van Wijngaarden, H., *Aetolia and the Aetolians. Studia Aetolica, Vol. 1.* Utrecht, 1987.

Bookidis, N., "Thermos". In *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Classical Sites*, pp. 910-11. Princeton, 1976.

Bosworth, A.B., "Early Relations between Aetolia and Macedonia." *AJAH* 1 (1976) pp. 164-81.

Bosquet, J. "Les aitolien à Delphes au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle." *BCH* 81 (1957) pp. 485-95.

Bousquet, J., "La stèle des Kyténiens au letôon de Xanthos." *REG* 101 (1988) pp. 12-53.

Briscoe, J., "Rome and the Class Struggle in the Greek States, 200-146BC." *P&P* 36 (1967) pp. 3-20.

Briscoe J., *A Commentary on Livy, Books XXXI-XXXIII.* Oxford, 1973.

Briscoe, J., *A Commentary on Livy, Books XXXIV-XXXVII.* Oxford, 1981.

Cartledge, P., and Spawforth, A., *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta: A Tale of Two Cities*. London, 1989.

Champion, C. "The Soteria at Delphi: Aetolian Propaganda in the Epigraphical Record." *AJPh* 116 (1995) pp.213-220.

Champion, C., "Polybius, Aetolia and the Gallic attack on Delphi (279BC)." *Historia* 45 (1996) pp. 315-328.

Champion, C., "The Nature of Authoritative Evidence in Polybius and Agelaus' Speech at Naupactus." *TAPhA* 127 (1997) pp.111-128.

Cohen, G.M., *The Hellenistic settlements, in Europe, the Islands and Asia Minor*. Berkeley, 1995.

Cornell, T.J., "Cicero on the Origins of Rome". In *Cicero's Republic*, ed. North J.A. and Powell, J.G.F, pp.41-56. London, 2001

Crawford M.H., *The Roman Republic*. London, 1978.

Curty, O., *Les parentés légendaires entre cités grecques, catalogue raisonné des inscriptions contenant le terme "syngeneia" et analyse critique*. Geneva, 1995.



Daux, G., *Delphes au II<sup>e</sup> et au I<sup>er</sup> Siècle depuis l'abaissement de L'Étolie jusqu' a la paix romaine*. Paris, 1936.

Davies, J. K., "Cultural, Social and Economic Factors in the Hellenistic World." In *Cambridge Ancient History Vol. VII<sup>2</sup>*, ed. Walbank F.W. and Astin, A.E., pp. 257-321.

De Ste Croix, G., *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek world from the Archaic Age to the Arab conquests*. London, 1981.

Deininger, J., "Aristainous von Megalopolis und Aristainous von Dyme." *Historia* 15 (1966) pp.376.

Deininger, J., "Bemerkungen zur Historizität der Rede des Agelaos 217v.Chr.(Plb.5.104)." *Chiron* 3 (1973) pp.103-8.

Deininger, J., *Der politische Widerstand gegen Rom in Griechenland, 217-87v.Chr.* Berlin, 1971.

Derow, P.S., "Polybios and the Embassy of Kallikrates." In *Essays presented to C.M. Bowra*, pp. 12-23. Oxford, 1970.

Derow, P.S., "Polybius, Rome and the East." *JRS* 69 (1979) pp.1-15.

Derow P.S., "Historical explanation: Polybius and his Predecessors. In *Greek Historiography*, pp.73-90, ed. Hornblower, S. Oxford, 1994.

Eckstein, A.M., "T. Quinctius. Flaminius and the campaign against Philip in 198BC." *Phoenix* 30 (1976) pp. 119-42.

Eckstein, A.M., "Nabis and Flaminius on the Argive Revolt of 198BC." *GRBS* 28 (1987) pp. 213-33.

Eckstein, A.M., *Senate and General: Individual Decision-making and Roman Foreign Relations 264-194BC*. Berkeley, 1987.

Eckstein, A.M., "Polybius, the Achaeans and the Freedom of the Greeks." *GRBS* 31 (1990) pp.45-71.

Eckstein, A.M., *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius*. Berkeley, 1995.

Errington, R.M., *Philopoemen*. Oxford, 1969.

Errington R.M., *The Dawn of Empire: Rome's Rise to World Power*. London, 1971.

Erskine, A., *The Hellenistic Stoa: Political Thought and Action*.  
London, 1990.

Erskine, A., "Rome in the Greek World: the Significance of a Name." In *The Greek World*, ed. Powell, A. pp. 368-83. London, 1995.

Erskine, A., "Delos, Aeneas and IG IX 4. 756." *ZPE* 117 (1997), pp. 133-136.

Erskine, A., "Polybios and Barbarian Rome." *Mediterraneo Antico* 3 (2000) pp.165-182.

Erskine, A., "Polybius." In *Encyclopaedia of Greece and the Hellenic tradition*, pp. 1382-1383, ed. Speake G., London 2000.

Erskine, A., *Troy between Greece and Rome: Local Tradition and Imperial Power*. Oxford, 2001.

Ferrary, J.L., *Philhellénisme et impérialisme: Aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique de la seconde guerre de Macédoine à la guerre contre Mithridate*. Rome, 1988.

Feyel, M., *Polybe et L'histoire de Béotie au III<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère*. Paris, 1942.



Fine, J.V.A. "The Background of the Social War of 220-217BC."  
*AJPh* 61 (1940) pp. 129-65.

Flacelière, R., *Les aitolians à Delphes: contribution à l'histoire de la Grèce central au III<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J-C.* Paris, 1937.

Frazer, J.G., *Pausanias' description of Greece, Vol.7.* London, 1898.

Fuks, A., "Agis, Cleomenes and equality." *CPh* 57 (1962) pp 161-6.

Fuks, A., "The Spartan citizen body in the mid-third century and its enlargement proposed by Agis IV." *Athenaeum* 40 (1962) pp. 244-63.

Fuks, A., "The Bellum Achaicum and its Social Aspect." *JHS* 90 (1970) pp 270-81.

Gauthier, P., *Les cités grecque et leurs bienfaiteurs.* BCH. supp.12. Paris, 1986.

Golan, D., *The Res Graecae in Polybius: Four Studies.* Como, 1995.

Grainger, J.D., *The League of the Aitolians.* Brill, 1999.

Green, P., *Alexander to Actium: the Hellenistic age*. Berkeley, 1990.

Gruen, E.S., "Aratos and the Achaean alliance with Macedon."  
*Historia* 21(1972), pp. 609-25.

Gruen E.S., "The Origins of the Achaean War." *JHS* 96 (1976), pp.  
49-69.

Gruen, E.S., *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*.  
Berkeley, 1984.

Gschnitzer, F., *Ein neuer spartanischer Staatsvertrag und die  
Verfassung des Peloponnesischen Bundes*. Mainz, 1978.

Habicht, C., *Pausanias' guide to ancient Greece*. Berkeley, 1985.

Habicht, C., *Athen: Die Geschichte der Stadt in hellenistischer Zeit*.  
Munich, 1995.

Hammond, N.G.L., "Illyris, Rome and Macedon in 229-225." *JRS*  
58 (1968) pp. 1-21.

Harris, W.V., *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70BC*.  
Oxford, 1979.

Holleaux, M., *Rome, la Grèce et les monarchies hellénistiques au III<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J. -C. (273-205)*. Paris, 1921.

Holleaux, M., "L'Alliance de Rome et de L'Achaïe." *REG* 34 (1921) pp.400-22.

Hornblower, S., "Introduction." In *Greek Historiography*, ed. Hornblower, S., pp.1-72. Oxford, 1994.

Hornblower, S., *A Commentary on Thucydides, Vol. 2*. Oxford, 1996.

Hornblower, S., *A Commentary on Thucydides, Vol. 1*. Oxford, 1991.

Hunt. P., *Slaves, Warfare and Ideology in the Greek Historians*. Cambridge, 1998.

Jeffery L.H., *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*. Oxford, 1961.

Jones, C.P., "Ethnos and Genos in Herodotus." *CQ* 46 (1996) pp.315-20.



Kallet-Marx, R.M., "Quintus Fabius Maximus and the Dyme affair (Syll.<sup>3</sup> 684)." CQ 45 (1995) pp. 129-153.

Kallet-Marx, R.M., *Hegemony to Empire: the Development of the Roman Imperium in the East from 148-62BC*. Berkeley, 1996.

Kirsten, E., Pleuron(2) RE 21 (1952) pp.239-69.

Klaffenbach, G., ed. *Inscriptiones Aetoliae. Fasc.1 of Inscriptiones Graecae, Vol.9, Part 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Berlin, 1932.

Larsen, J.A.O. "The Assembly of the Aetolian League." TAPhA 83 (1952) pp.1-33.

Larsen J.A.O., *Representative Government in Greek and Roman History*. Berkeley, 1955.

Larsen, J.A.O., "The Aetolians and the Cleomenic War." In *The Classical Tradition: Literary and Historical Studies in Honour of Harry Caplan*, ed. Wallach, L., pp.43-57. Ithaca, 1966.

Larsen, J.A.O., *Greek Federal States: their Institutions and History*. Oxford, 1968.

- Larsen, J.A.O., "The Aetolian-Achaean Alliance of ca. 238-220BC." *CPh* 70 (1975), pp. 159-72.
- Lehmann, G.A., *Ansätze zu einer Theorie des griechischen Bundesstaates bei Aristoteles und Polybios*. Gottingen, 2001.
- Luce, T.J., *The Greek Historians*. London, 1997.
- McDonald, A.H., and Walbank, F.W., "The Origins of the Second Macedonian War." *JRS* 27 (1937) pp. 180-207.
- Meadows, A.R., "Pausanias and the Historiography of Classical Sparta." *CQ* 45 (1996), pp.93-113.
- Mendels, D., "Aetolia 331-301BC: Frustration, Political Power and Survival." *Historia* 33 (1984), pp. 129-80.
- Mendels, D., "Did Polybius have "Another" View of the Aetolian league?" *AncSoc* 15-17 (1984-86), pp. 63-73.
- Morgan, C., *Athletes and Oracles: the Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eight Century BC*. Cambridge, 1990.
- Morgan, C., "Ethnicity and Early Greek States." *PCPS* 37 (1991) pp. 131-163.

- Morgan, C., with Hall, J., "Achaian *Poleis* and Achaian Colonisation." In *An Introduction to an Inventory of Poleis*, ed. M.H.Hansen., pp. 164-233. Copenhagen, 1996.
- Morgan, M.G., "Metellus Macedonicus and the Province of Macedonia." *Historia* 18 (1969) pp. 422-446.
- Musti, D., "Sull' idea di *suggenia* in iscrizioni greche." *ASNP* 2 32 (1963) pp.225-239.
- Nielsen, T.H., and Roy, J., "The Azanians of Northern Arkadia." *Classica Et Mediaevalia* 2 (1998) pp. 5-44.
- Nielsen, T.H., *ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΚΗ ΠΟΛΙΣ. The Polis Structure of Arkadia in the Archaic and Classical periods*. Ph.D diss. University of Copenhagen, 1996.
- North J. A., "The Development of Roman Imperialism." *JRS* 71 (1981) pp. 1-9.
- O'Neil L.J., "The Political Elite of the Achaean and Aetolian leagues." *AncSoc* 15-17 (1984-86) pp. 33-61.
- Oliva, P. *Sparta and Her Social problems*. Prague, 1971.



Orsi, D. P., *L' Alleanza Acheo- Macedone: studio su Polibio*. Bari, 1991.

Payne, H.G., "On the Thermon Metopes." *ABSA* 27 (1925) pp.124-32.

Pédech, P., *La méthode historique de Polybe* (Paris, 1964).

Pédech, P., "Polybe Hipparque de la confederation achaïeene." *LEC* 37 (1969) pp. 252-259.

Petzold, K.E., *Studien zur Methode des Polybios und zu historischen Auswertung*. Munich, 1969.

Piper, L.J., *Spartan Twilight*. New Rochelle, 1986.

Porter W.H., *Plutarch's life of Aratus*. Cork, 1937.

Poulsen, F., " La deuxième campagne de fouilles gréco-danoises à Calydon." *CRAI* 72 (1929) pp. 76-87.

Powell, J.G.F., "Were Cicero's *Laws* the laws of Cicero's *Republic*?" In *Cicero's Republic*, ed. North J.A. and Powell, J.G.F., pp. 17-39, London, 2001.

Purcell, N., "On the Sacking of Carthage and Corinth." In *Ethics and Rhetoric; Classical Essays for Donald Russell on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Innes, D., Hine, H., Pelling, C., pp 133-148, Oxford 1995.

Ranger, T., *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: a Comparative Study*. Berkeley, 1985.

Rhodes, P.J., with Lewis, D. M., *The Decrees of the Greek States*. Oxford, 1996.

Rich, J., "Roman Aims in the First Macedonian War." *PCPS* 210 (1983) pp. 126-180.

Rigsby, K., *Asyilia: Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World*. Berkeley, 1996.

Sacks, K.S., "Polybius' Other View of Aetolia." *JHS* 95 (1975), pp. 92-107.

Sacks, K.S., *Polybius on the Writing of History*. Berkeley 1981.

Schmitt, H.H., *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums, III: Die Verträge der griechisch-römischen Welt von 338 bis 200 v. Chr.* (Munich, 1969).

Scholten J. B., *The Politics of Plunder: Aitolians and their Koinon in the Early Hellenistic era (279-217BC)*. Berkeley, 2000.

Schweigert, E., "Greek Inscriptions.- A Decree concerning the Aetolian league." *Hesperia* 8 (1939) pp. 5-12.

Sherk, R., *Roman Documents from the Greek East: Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the age of Augustus*. Baltimore, 1969.

Shimron, B., *Late Sparta: The Spartan Revolution, 234-146BC*. Buffalo, 1972.

Snodgrass, A., *Archaic Greece: the age of experiment*. London, 1980.

Texier, J. G., *Nabis*. Paris, 1975.

Unz, R., "The Chronology of the Chremonidean War." *GRBS* 27 (1986) pp. 29-43.

Urban, R., *Wachstum und krise der achäischen Bundes*. Weisbaden, 1979.

Walbank, F.W., *Aratos of Sicyon*. Cambridge, 1933.



Walbank, F. W., "Aratos' attack on Cynaetha." *JHS* 56 (1936) pp. 67-71.

Walbank F.W., *Philip V of Macedon*. Cambridge, 1940.

Walbank, F.W., *A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol.1*. Oxford, 1957.

Walbank, F.W., "Polybius and Rome's Eastern Policy." *JRS* 55 (1965) pp. 1-16. = *Selected papers*, pp. 138-156.

Walbank, F.W., *A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol.2*. Oxford, 1967.

Walbank, F.W. *Polybius*. Berkeley, 1972.

Walbank, F.W. "Were there Greek federal states?" *SCI* 3 (1976-77) pp. 27-51. = *Selected papers*, pp. 20-37.

Walbank, F.W., "Polybius' Last Ten Books." In *Historiographia antiqua: commentationes Lovanienses in honorem W. Peremans septuadenarii editae*. Leuven 1977, pp. 139-162. = *Selected papers* pp. 325-343.

Walbank, F.W., *A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol.3.*  
Oxford, 1979.

Walbank, F. W., "Macedonia and Greece." In *Cambridge Ancient History Vol. VII (2nd ed)* Walbank, F.W., and Austin, A.E., pp-  
221-257.      *Date ?*

Walbank, F.W., *Selected Papers: Studies in Greek and Roman Historiography.* Cambridge, 1985.

Walbank, F.W., "Antigonus Doson's attack on Cytinium." *ZPE*  
109 (1989) pp. 184-192.

Walbank F.W., "Review of D.P. Orsi's *L'Alleanza Acheo-Macedone.*" *CR* 42 (1993), pp. 197-198.

Walbank, F.W., *The Hellenistic World.* Cambridge, 1993.

Walbank. M. B., *Athenian Proxenies of the fifth Century.* Toronto,  
1978.

Woodhead, A. G., *The Athenian Agora Vol. XVI: inscriptions and decrees.* Princeton, 1997.

Woodhouse, W.J., *Aetolia: its Geography, Topography and Antiquities*. Oxford, 1897.

